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SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

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21

INTERVIEWS: LEIGH BRACKETT & EDMOND HAMILTON

Tim Kirk

THE
DREAM QUARTER
BARRY MALZBERG

HOW TO KILL A BOOK

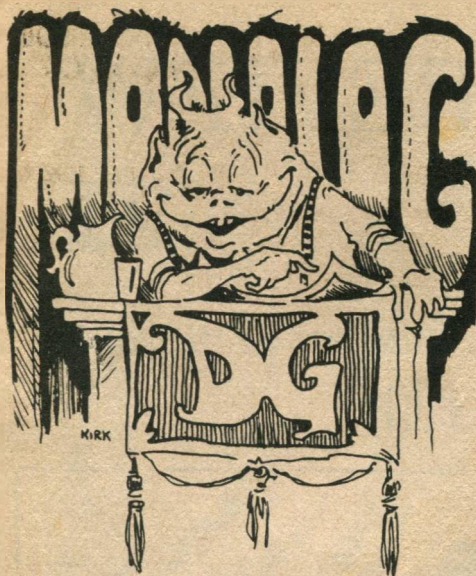
NOISE LEVEL
JOHN BRUNNER

MORE MALZBERG
VS
SCHWEITZER

THE VIVISECTOR



DEL REY CONFLICT OF INTEREST IN ANALOG?



1-7-77 Here we go again. SFR #20 went to the printers this morning, and now I begin #21.

I'm about a week ahead of schedule, so if all goes well #20 will be in the mails by the 24th, which will see it delivered in early-to-mid-February in this country. I've been aiming at this mailing schedule for a couple years now. hope I can keep it up in future issues.

The economy has shown some (I think deceptive) signs of further recovery in Nov.-Dec. In 1977 you can look for increased inflation of the money supply by the government. They'll run at least a 75 billion dollar deficit. Carter's vow to balance the budget is ridiculous. He'll be doing damn good if he can keep the 1978 budget from exceeding a 100 billion dollar deficit. With the object lesson of Britain before our eyes, we resolutely follow the same easy-money seductive road.

Before we realize it---before Carter is finished with his 8 years---this country will be paying out close to 100 billion dollars per year in interest charges on the national debt, which will be in excess of one trillion dollars.

BOOKS RECEIVED

SWORD OF THE DEMON by Richard A. Lupoff. Harper & Row, \$7.95, 1977.

'A science fiction fantasy based largely on ancient Japanese mythology. Here in the silent void of darkness and cold, two figures--neither man nor woman---whirl and attract and struggle until energy sparks and new life is created. As the yellow androgynous form flees the void through the heart of a massive rock, an exciting adventure for Aizen, the man-god, and Kishimo begins on the back of a great winged creature and continues beyond the limits of the

sky and below the seas to an ancient moored ship, Ofuna.

'To reach the land of Tsuna, Aizen and Kishimo have no maps and no protection, but their determination carries them from battles with sea raiders and icestorms, to the nether world of sailors and travellers lost at sea, and down to the terrifying pit of the eight-headed serpent.'

Comment: Science fiction it ain't. Pretentious third person present style. Incredible. Bad. Boring. A mistake.

THE WORLD OF NULL-A by A. E. van Vogt. Berkley 03322-8, \$1.50.

Comment: One of the all-time classics of science fiction, first published in 1945. A must-read for any now sf reader. This edition has a special Introduction by van Vogt which explains the history and controversy of the novel, and tells of its core meanings. It is invaluable for a full understanding and enjoyment of the novel. This edition was revised by van Vogt to silence old criticisms and to improve the story.

STAR BRIDGE by Jack Williamson and James Gunn. Berkley 03294-9, \$1.50

'The Masters of Eron were the mightiest beings in the universe. Their science enabled them to control an inter-galactic empire---and enslave entire worlds to feed their decadent pleasure drives. But Horn refused to submit, roaming the frontier planets as a hired adventurer. He was just another space-bum, until someone offered him a fortune for a special job. All Horn had to do was assassinate the golden-skinned god who held the key to Eron's inhuman power---the ancient secret they called star bridge.'

Comment: Written in 1955, first time in paperback. Looks like very good space adventure in the classic tradition.

BUY JUPITER by Isaac Asimov. Fawcett 2-3062-7, \$1.50.

Comment: 24 short stories chosen by Isaac, and with fascinating introductions and end comments for each. You read as much for his intros and end pieces as for the stories. A performance few writers can match.

CLARION SF, Edited by Kate Wilhelm. Berkley 03293-0, \$1.25. 1977.

Comment: Ten stories by Clarion sf workshop writers, and three articles about the Clarion experience by Gene Wolfe, Vonda McIntyre and Damon Knight.

The stories are pretty good, on the whole, with some very good. I especially liked "The Thing Itself" by Kim Stanley Robinson. A remarkable examination of happiness...in a cage. Absorbing.

Yesterday three Laser books arrived: THE EXTRATERRITORIAL by John Morressy (#52); THE ECOLOG by R. Faraday Nelson (#53); and THE RIVER AND THE DREAM by Raymond F. Jones (#54).

I put ECOLOG aside to read, and put it down after 25 pages or so, disappointed. Ray says in his introduction he considers this his first true space opera.

I hope not. I found it cliched, juvenile, predictable and a drag. And I quickly decided not to waste any more time.

1-8-77 The one thing that bothers me about "pure" libertarians is their absoluteness. No government at all? Ever? Let private enterprise take care of police work, firefighting, the mails....

Yeah, but. I just finished reading OIL POWER by Carl Solberg, which is an unblinkered look at the rise of (among others) John D. Rockefeller and his corporate power. Old John bought local governments, even state governments, to get his way. In an era of minimal state and federal regulation, these private power structures naturally, inevitably, strove for monopoly. The lesson is clear: Private Enterprise hates competition and will, if possible, drive out competitors and go for monopoly or cartels. They opt for control of the market. They try to control prices and wages and supply.

The libertarians are right in wanting less and less government, but I have yet to read of any plan to control private power and maintain competition.

Seems to me you'd end up (if government were somehow banished) with super giant private enterprise becoming government in practice if not in name.

I think we are stuck with gigantism of power structures in this world, given the dynamics of computers and especially instantaneous communications. The trend is to more and more social, cultural, financial and psychological interdependence.

The only way to resist that thrust is to use the new technology to free yourself, as much as possible, from control by others, and from abuse by others. At the same time it should be possible to enjoy the benefits of the coming revolution in electronics and life-styles, selectively, of course. There is no substitute for intelligence and maturity.

The old often say, "What a shame youth is wasted on the young." The young might well say, "What a shame wisdom is wasted on the old."

COVER BY STEPHEN FABIAN
Black Margot, from THE BLACK FLAME
by Stanley G. Weinbaum. *FANTASTIC*
NUDES Second Series, © 1976,
1977 by Gerry de la Ree

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LETTER FROM SHARON JARVIS, EDITOR,
DOUBLEDAY & COMPANY.

Concerning some things said in
the Phil Dick interview in SFR 19.

January 3, 1977

'The agreement between Phil and Doubleday specified a certain advance. When he decided what he'd written deserved more money, Doubleday gave it to him. We didn't have to; we could have legally insisted he stick to the contract.

'Yes, the ceiling for science fiction is \$3,000 but on special occasions we go beyond that. We could not for Phil's book because it did not fill the requirements for school and library sales. A shrunken market means fewer books sold, resulting in a probable unearned advance. To offset this, we later decided to market the book as both trade and science fiction. You are correct in pointing out that this is all to Phil's advantage.

'Now for a little lesson in first---and consecutive---printings. The line about Doubleday never reprinting an sf book, no matter how well it sells, is nonsense. We have reprinted certain titles. However, what Doubleday---and every other publisher---does using all of its resources is to estimate the total sales of a book. It could be any amount from six to sixty thousand. If the company knows its business, the book will in a period of time sell out its first printing---with minimal returns. It goes without saying (although some people have to be reminded) that returns can cancel out previously earned money for the author. When a company goes back to print on a title, it doesn't have to mean the book is selling well but rather the company underestimated sales. This can have a negative side, since books will be in demand but not readily available and sales can be lost.

'The fact that Doubleday rarely goes into a second printing means that we have correctly forecast the proper amount for a first printing, keeping returns to a minimum and saving everybody money.

'I'd also like to point out that our advances are no different than most other publishers (with a few rich exceptions), but that our market is different (schools and libraries) which necessitates a different approach. We are not Bantam, do not have its market and distribution, and a \$12,000 advance is totally inappropriate for us and would not earn out. (It will no doubt earn out for Bantam.) I wish Phil and other sf authors would remember this.'

Thanks for the different perspective. The problems of the pub-

lisher are often forgotten.

LETTER FROM ALFRED DI COSTANZO

January 4, 1977

'I have heard nothing in the fanzines or book review columns about the PICTORIAL HISTORY OF SCIENCE FICTION by David Kyle, published by Hamlyn. In many ways it is similar to Gunn's ALTERNATE WORLDS; it's just as large (9-1/2 x 13). Its chapters are laid out like the Gunn book, with chapters on Wells, Verne, etc. It has about half the amount of text as ALTERNATE WORLDS, but David Kyle's writing style is just as readable and informative as Gunn's. The book has more illustrations than Gunn's, and many in superb color. It's a more handsome looking book than ALTERNATE WORLDS. It was printed in Holland. The book is completely up to date, it lists the '76 and '77 worldcons, prints (in color) covers of paperbacks which I still see on the stands and in bookstores.

'Now get this, the book is copyrighted 1976, but you can't buy it at most bookstores; it is being sold for \$7.95 as a remainder! in card stores or the remainder tables of the larger bookstores. Have you heard of this book and its strange distribution?'

No, it's new to me. Strange things happen in publishing. Thanks for letting us know about it. Poor Dave.

IDLE NOTE: There will probably be a TV game available within a year which will allow you to play chess with yourself or others on your TV screen. Talk of a chess hookup which pits you against the "machine" according to whatever degree of difficulty you wish.

Can you dig people playing chess with each other on the TV sets via CB radio? "Got your ears on, good buddy? This is the Alien Critic moving to King's Bishop four."

1-10-77 The weather outside is frightful, but inside it's so delightful...

It was 18° last night and a rigorous test for my li'l darlin' of a wood stove. Did it heat the house? Were we shivering? Was the oil furnace resorted to?

It gives me great heartburn---too many cups of coffee---to announce that the neat tin can did a superb job of heating, requiring about one Presto Log per two hours to keep the temperature at a comfortable 72-4°.

Yes, friends, you, too, can save incredible amounts of money on heating bills for a mere \$19.95 plus about \$10 for stove pipe, an elbow or two, and a damper. All it takes is a will, humility, a fractured hubris and the courage to endure the doubtful looks of your friends, relatives, and neighbors.

Be ecology-minded, save precious energy, save your soul, save your oil... AND be smug, be virtuous, and be on the side of the angels of the future. And be secure in the knowledge that in an emergency you have a great back-up heating system for when the gas supply poops out, when the oil supply gives out, when the electric supply shorts out.

And now I pass into the next scene of this day's life experiences,
BOOKS RECEIVED

THE HORROR CHAMBERS OF JULES DE GRANDIN By Seabury Quinn. Popular Library 03183, \$1.50

Comment: This is the latest in a string of Jules de Grandin occult adventure story collections. Jules is Quinn's fictional detective of the supernatural who was published first in the dear dead days of pulp, almost entirely in WEIRD TALES. I remember him well.

This is the sixth collection. The previous five have been:

THE HELLFIRE FILES OF JULES DE GRANDIN, Popular Library 00428, \$1.25
THE ADVENTURES OF JULES DE GRANDIN, Popular Library 00394, \$1.25
THE CASEBOOK OF JULES DE GRANDIN, Popular Library 00404, \$1.25

THE SKELETON CLOSET OF JULES DE GRANDIN, Popular Library 08527, \$1.25

THE DEVIL'S BRIDE (a novel) with Jules de Grandin, Popular Library 00424, \$1.25.

You will note that the latest in the series, THE HORROR CHAMBERS, published in January, 1977, is 25¢ more expensive than the others, published in 1976. So it goes.

This series should serve to convince all writers to NEVER sign away all rights to any story. Look what happens sometimes: 40 or so years later your widow can reap a bonanza. A small bonanza, but you never can tell; Jules may turn up on TV one of these days.

THE LAST GENE by Chris Longo, Major Books 3117, \$1.25.

Comment: Two proposterous geneticists have a child--supposedly the perfect baby because they had tinkered with the genes. Well...it began to Change, turned into a squash or something, and died--probably for lack of sunlight and a place to put down roots...

The lady geneticist goes bonkers and her hubby has a heart at-

tack. Their trusted, loyal, black servant man and wife are not so trustworthy, or loyal, and one might say there is a nigger in the woodpile.

This is a science fiction novel of the Absurd with a bad case of Clever Writer busy at work in the vitals. Still..still...it kept me reading, it held a series of surprises, and it does have a kind of macabre joy-of-death to it. You could do worse.

A WREATH OF STARS by Bob Shaw. Doubleday, \$5.95.

Comment: I consider a new Bob Shaw novel an Event. I am reading this and will review in a few days.

1-13-77 As I had thought, the unemployment rate went down a bit to 7.9% in December. Not as much as some government statisticians had hoped or expected.

The wholesale price level jumped to a .9% rate, which translates to 10.8% for the year, if it continues. Of course, sooner or later, the 12% increase in the money supply by the Federal Reserve in 1976 is going to work its way through the economy and produce approximately 12% inflation.

With at least 75 billion dollar deficits scheduled for 1977 and 1978, it is clear that balancing the budget is no longer even a remote possibility, in fact. It is now politically impossible to even cut the budget deficit below 75 billion.

I suspect we are entering a fevered time of troubles which will see a rush of inflation-induced boom, and a still-high unemployment rate, a surge of new debt, a surge of interest rates to new highs, and an imposition of wage/price/interest/profit "guidelines" which will fail. The Democrats will say, "We gave you evil profiteers a chance to cooperate, but you were too selfish and

antisocial, so now---no more Mr. Nice Guys---we'll slap on total controls in the national interest."

Spend your money now on things you'll need for the long haul, before they double and triple in price.

To that end I had my Gestetner 466 electric mimeo overhauled and cured of its eccentric bugs. I just got the bill---\$181.85. A hell of a lot of money to clean a small air pump and locate the problem with the paper-table lift mechanism. They also rebuilt the ink pump. Five hours of shop time plus pickup and delivery.

But I can now save at least \$50. per year by mimeographing my subscription/renewal/back-issue forms, and my invoices. I may even try again to mimeograph the mailing envelopes, since Action Print for the last two issues has been spoiling 15% of the runs. If I can do that on the Gestetner I can save another \$100. at least.

I would like to be able to buy a photocopier with repro quality good enough to make screened copies of covers and photos for layouts in SFR. That would pay for itself in four or five years, I think. A headlining machine would also be nice, but a luxury, since I don't really need it.

I have changed over to using Eaton Allen correctable film ribbons and lift-off tapes for this IBM selectric. They are compatible with the equivalent IBM products and cost about 20% less.

SMALL PRESS MAGAZINE RECEIVED

WYRD #6. New editor: Greg Stafford, POB 6302, Albany, CA 94706. Irregular, \$2.50, 3 for \$6.00.

In the large booklet format, off-set covers, superb inside mimeography (using print reduction and all electronic stencils). Ninety pages plus covers.

All that said, how good is the fiction, poetry and art? Not very, on a professional level. But it is a semi-prozine in that it pays small sums for its material.

COSMOS #1, a new sf prozine, in the 8-1/2 x 11 size, is due out in March, 1977, says a flier from Baronet Publishing Co., 509 Madison Av., NY, NY 10022. Jack Gaughan is the art director, and David G. Hartwell is the editor. The first issue has a lineup of Names---Bishop, Benford, Moore, Niven, Pohl, Leiber....

I cannot help but wonder why, after the flops of VERTEX, ODYSSEY, and the approaching flop of ISAAC ASIMOV'S SF MAG (according to a

writer whose judgement I respect---he gives it six issues), why these hopeful people think, seriously, their magazine will fare any better?

They don't pay any better. They probably won't have any better distribution. And they don't seem to realize that magazine sf is dying (with the exception of ANALOG). The publisher and editor do not have a clear-cut editorial slant to present to the public. I suppose they will claim to present the best new fiction available.

To put it very bluntly, I think, on existing evidence, that COSMOS will disappear within six issues, too.

I do not think the publisher and editor realize that unless they clearly and blatantly offer the readers something not already available in the other magazines and myriad paperbacks, they'll die on the vine. The science fiction readership does not need and will not support another ho-hum sf zine.

THE INTERVIEW WITH TIM KIRK arrived yesterday. Jon Gustafson submitted 15 questions, and Tim answered them in writing. The whole of the interview runs to less than 2000 words, so I may have room for something else. I'm sure something else will show up. I have an article by Darrell Schweitzer, "Prithee Sirrah, What Doughtou Mean By Archaic Style In Fantasy?", which is about due to die of old age and disappointment if I don't get it into print soon.

1-14-77 The news that there may be a contract out on the life of Henry Kissinger (placed by some angry jews in Israel) is father to a few bemused thoughts.

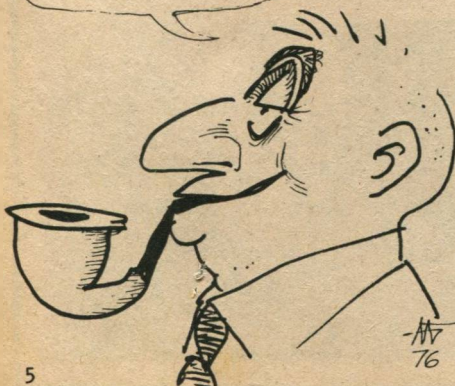
If, perchance, Henry should be offed, a new growth industry may come into being: government policy by murder/threat-of-murder. That is to say, what has been rumored to be a Mafiosa method of enforcing its desires in government policy (ever wondered why the Mafia isn't wiped out by federal enforcers, and why there is so much talk and so little action by Attorneys General and their Presidents?) may be surfaced as a credible method for influencing policy by other groups.

Can you see the headlines? POSTMASTER WASTED BY UNHAPPY MAILERS - SENATOR'S VOTE INFLUENCED BY DEATH THREAT - CITY COUNCIL VOTES NO UNDER 'GUN' OF ANGRY CITIZENS GROUP.

Generally speaking, it's easy to kill somebody. The trick is getting away with it. That's why fanatics

MONOLOG CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

I CALL IT A BAGPIPE
BECAUSE IT HOLDS
A NICKLE BAG...



AN INTERVIEW WITH LEIGH BRACKETT AND EDMOND HAMILTON

EDMOND HAMILTON 1904 - 1977

It's always a shock when someone you respect and admire dies.

Edmond Hamilton more than any other writer was the man who personified science fiction for me during the thirties and early forties. He shaped me perhaps as much as any other human being. Losing him is like losing a father or a mother.

He died February 1st, 1977. He was 72.

He began his professional writing career in 1926 with a sale to WEIRD TALES. He wrote almost until he died.

His most well-known works were the Captain Future stories, THE STAR KINGS and CITY AT THE WORLD'S END.

Edmond Hamilton is survived by his wife, Leigh Brackett.

I'm very happy to be able to present the following excellent interview with Ed Hamilton and Leigh Brackett in this issue of SFR.

---REG

REG NOTE: TANGENT is a fan magazine which has been presenting a series of excellent interviews with SF writers. When I read TANGENT's interview with Leigh Brackett and Edmond Hamilton in the Summer, 1976 issue, I realized it was an exceptional effort and instantly asked for permission to reprint it in SFR. TANGENT's print run of 800 is small enough to insure that most of SFR's readership will not have already seen this piece.

For those who would like to see issues of TANGENT, the address is:

611-A Division St.,
Oshkosh, WI 54901

and the price is \$1.50 single copy,
4 issues for \$5.00. I suggest all
checks be made payable to David Truesdale, the editor.

CONDUCTED BY DAVID TRUESDALE
WITH PAUL MCGUIRE

I am continually amazed at how many charming, warm, wonderful people there are in the world of science fiction.

It was on Sunday afternoon, April 18, around two o'clock, that Paul McGuire and I enjoyed the privilege of talking quite openly and informally with Leigh Brackett and Ed Hamilton, and boy oh boy did we talk!

For about two hours we laughed at Ed's stories about Leigh and Leigh's stories about Ed, and somewhere in between learned some of the most delightful information about the beginnings of science fiction---and how it came to be developed---from a pair of those who should know.

Ed Hamilton is responsible for the captivating series of juvenile stories featuring none other than CAPTAIN FUTURE, and one of the great classics of science fiction, the novel THE STAR KINGS. He also spent many years working for two close friends from the early days of SF fandom, Julius Schwartz and Mort Weisinger, writing about larger-than-life heroes such as Superman, Superboy, and many many others of the National comics line. Born on Oct. 21, 1904, he has written since his late teens and is still writing today. He has lost neither the imagination or the skills that made, and do make him, one of the greatest.



Leigh Brackett began, in the field of science fiction, a little later than did Ed, but managed, after a full wastebasket or two, to establish herself quite prominently. There was hardly an issue of PLANET STORIES without a story from Brackett somewhere within its pages. She is most known and loved for her Halfling stories, her wonderful swashbuckling tales more often than not set on a Mars of her own devising, and a character named Eric John Stark, although she has been directly involved with such classic movies as THE BIG SLEEP, ELDORADO, and RIO BRAVO, as none other than scripter of the screenplay, as it were. Born Dec. 7, 1915, she is now in the process of writing her first science fiction drama for television, part of an anthology series in the works for NBC.

A PARTIAL LIST OF THE WORKS OF ED HAMILTON AND LEIGH BRACKETT

HAMILTON:

CRASHING SUNS (collection) Ace Books, 1965.
THE STAR KINGS (1949) Warner Books, 1967.
BATTLE FOR THE STARS (1956).
CITY AT WORLD'S END (1951) Fawcett Crest, 1957.

BRACKETT:

THE STARMEN OF LLYRDIS (1952) BALLANTINE, 1976.
THE SWORD OF RHIANNON (1953) ACE Books.
THE LONG TOMORROW (1955) BALLANTINE, 1974.
THE HALFLING and other stories (collection) ACE Books, 1973.
THE GINGER STAR (Reintroducing Eric John Stark) BALLANTINE, 1974.
THE HOUNDS OF SKAITH (Further adventures of Eric John Stark) BALLANTINE, 1974.
THE BEST OF PLANET STORIES #1, edited by Leigh Brackett. BALLANTINE, 1975.
THE REAVERS OF SKAITH (Eric John Stark #3) BALLANTINE for August, 1976.

BRACKETT AND HAMILTON:

(Upcoming in the THE FINAL DANGEROUS VISIONS, ed. by Harlan Ellison, Real Soon Now) "Stark and the Star Kings", their first formal collaboration.

TANGENT: Ed, how did you meet Leigh, and when was that?

HAMILTON: Well, it was in 1940. Mort Weisinger and Julie Schwartz, my old friends, were out in Beverly Hills from New York on vacation. Julie was my agent at that time and Jack Williamson and I went over to see him in Beverly Hills, and Julie said, "I have a client here, a young girl who lives in Los Angeles, and she'll be coming through this morning to see me." So when she arrived she was overcome with awe to meet two great science fiction writers like Jack Williamson and myself; but I was quite kind to her, put her at her ease ... I think I'll let her tell her version of it now (laughing to Leigh).

BRACKETT: (Laughing) Well, they were both looking thoroughly auctorial; they were both wearing sweat-shirts, looking like geniuses. I nearly fell through the floor. Jack Williamson, Edmond Hamilton, they were the two great names. Seven years later he got around to asking me to marry him.

HAMILTON: There was a considerable amount that went between all that. In 1941 I came back out to California with Julie. We lived in Los Angeles in a bungalow that was kind of the center of the science fiction group out there, and we could get together with some beer and booze and sit around and drink. Well, she would come sometime in the afternoon and we would always have some cake for her. We didn't feel that a nice young lady should be offered booze so we always had a nice piece of cake for her. I think she would have preferred the booze--

BRACKETT: I would have preferred the booze, except that when I went home my mother would have said "(Gasp!) You've been drinking with those terrible people."

HAMILTON: In 1946 I came back out to Hollywood and a few months later we were married.

BRACKETT: Well, one thing that came between was the war, of course. He was back in Pennsylvania where he was living then. We had to correspond.

TANGENT: Which of you began writing first?

HAMILTON: First? I did. I sold my first story in 1926, fifty years ago. But she's not that old (smirking).

BRACKETT: (Laughing) Why, I was just a child at the time.



TANGENT: What led you into writing science fiction? What were the reasons?

HAMILTON: Economic reasons were never one of them because it was one of the poorest ways to make a living. Some people, myself included, are born with a feeling about these things. In my case I couldn't even read. This was on a farm in Ohio back in 1908 when I was four years old. I got hold of some magazine that contained an article by H.G. Wells called "The Things That Live On Mars". It was, as I see it now, a follow-up to his very successful WAR OF THE WORLDS. And it had these pictures of tall, slender trees; strange looking Martians moving about. I looked at that magazine until it wore out. I wasn't yet able to read it, to read the article, but those pictures! I sat and wondered if Mars was a long way off and if it was a very strange place. This feeling I say; I think people have a bent toward this, that is to say, I had a very large family and I don't think any of them read anything but maybe my first story. They just had no interest in science fiction. They were all great readers, but not science fiction.

TANGENT: Back in those days it was considered second-class literature, wasn't it?

HAMILTON: Very much.

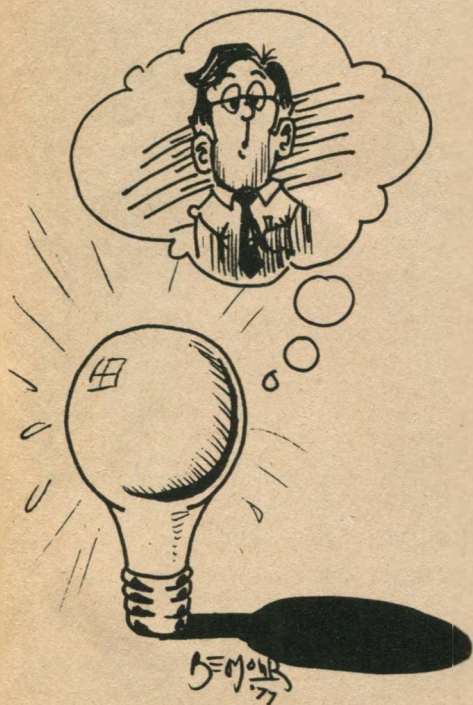
TANGENT: What changes have taken place in the writing since those early days?

HAMILTON: It has of course changed a great deal. I'm thankful that I got into it at a very early day because frankly the first story I wrote I could never sell today. It wouldn't be accepted; it would be crude. In those days science fiction was in very little magazines, they were very anxious for printable material, therefore a lot of us--Jack Williamson and I were talking about this last night--succeeded in breaking into print and getting

a little money for it, very little, while we learned to write. Nowadays the youngsters have a much harder time. They've got to write really good from the very first story. Being a product of the older days I can't help feeling an affection for those old magazines. I prefer the old stories, but that doesn't change the fact that the field has advanced in literary quality, technique, and everything. We chaps. most of us who started in the old days, could never make it now, with what we did then.

TANGENT: You had written other things before that?

BRACKETT: I tried. I mean I had tried because I was heading for the adventure and short story market. And unfortunately I hadn't been anywhere, I didn't know anything, and I was bucking the biggest names in the business. I got nowhere, understandably. Finally I figured I was wasting my time and knew that what I really wanted to write anyway was science fiction. If I want to write about



Mars who's going to contradict me? Nobody's been there. And besides, that's what I really wanted to write about so that's what I did. Sure enough, there wasn't a heck of a lot of money in it, but it was a heck of a lot of fun; there's some awfully nice people.

It was a very chummy world in those days, because there weren't very many of us writing, or reading

science fiction, and I had not, at that time, connected with any fan group. In fact, I didn't even know there were such things. Henry Kuttner was the one who introduced me to the LASFS out there, but that was after I had broken in--

HAMILTON: The first date we ever had we went down to the science fiction society meeting. Jack Williamson drove down, and he and I sat in the front seat and we put her in the back seat. I think I made a bad impression; I was smoking, then as even now, when a large chunk of hot ash went back into her eyes. Jack made these commiserating sounds but all I said was "Is it bleeding?" or something like that (laughing). She must have thought I was a very hard character.

BRACKETT: But you didn't go around bragging that you wrote science fiction because people either had never heard of science fiction and said "What's that?" and then you'd try to tell them and they'd say "Oh, it's that Buck Roger's stuff"; and you were always getting advice to write something good, like in THE LADIES HOME JOURNAL--small world. We kind of clung to each other, you know. A fellow nut you would think of out there in that outer windy darkness... you kind of cling together because you speak the same language (chuckling).

HAMILTON: Wherever you went, if you knew of a resident science fiction writer you would call him on the phone, announce yourself, and you were always instantly welcomed with open arms. You would sit up till all hours talking about this, or that, about science fiction, because in those days there were no clubs. But we were always glad to see each other because we felt so lonesome. (To Leigh): You had quite a strict family back then--

BRACKETT: Oh, yes, very.

HAMILTON: I got you back at ten o'clock one night and you got quite a scolding for being out that late. A few years later during the war I picked up this novel she had written called NO GOOD ((?)) FOR THE CORPSE. It was a tough private-eye novel. The hero was named Edmond, wasn't he?

BRACKETT: Uhm-hmm.

HAMILTON: I always felt you were dreaming of me (laughing). I hoped.

BRACKETT: (Chuckling) I liked the name.

HAMILTON: She had written this novel that was full of Humphrey Bogart-type characters. "I grabbed her and said, 'Doll, you're quite a dish,'" and all this sort of thing and people

were shooting other people up, and I told my folks...Betty and Phil had looked at that novel...and I said I didn't know where she got all this experience because I couldn't keep her out past ten o'clock at night (laughing).

BRACKETT: Well, I'll tell you where I got it. I got it from reading Hammett and Chandler.

TANGENT: Leigh, how did you meet Ray Bradbury?

BRACKETT: Ray was a member of the LASFS group. This was before he had started to sell so he was writing like mad and trying like mad to break in. (To Ed): That summer that you and Julie were out there Ray was selling newspapers on the corner about a block or so away from our place.

HAMILTON: Julie always liked Ray very much, so when he'd lay in some beer and whiskey and so on for our evening parties, he would always get some Coke for Ray. He was such a kid he didn't drink anything and Julie would say, "I'll get a Little Coke for the kid." As I say, Ray was very young, and he would bring his stories over for Julie and I to read. Finally I told him, "You don't want us to tell you how to write. You know very well what you want to do and you're going to do it your own style. What you're bringing these stories over for is that you want us to tell you they're good. They're good. So just go ahead and write them." I think it was that summer he published his first story that he collaborated with Henry Hasse on, and it appeared. Well, he brought the magazine over to show us and he showed it around, was just beaming like the sun, and then he was so overcome that he took the magazine like this and he kissed it and kissed it (laughter from all).

TANGENT: Ed, how did you get involved in writing comic books?

HAMILTON: Well, of course, the main attraction with comic books was that they paid so much more than science fiction. Mort Weisinger, an old friend and pal of mine, had moved over to the comics from Standard Magazines. In 1941 he wanted me to work for him over there, and I thought about it and then told him I didn't want to be bothered by it. After the war, actually it was VJ Day, he wrote and said Ed have you thought better about it? Well, during the war markets were very poor in science fiction and I was having a rough time making a living, so Mort knew I didn't like to live in New York so he said if you'll come up and spend a week with us we'll go over and show you how we do these things and then you can do them by mail. So I went

up...and rather liked doing them as a matter of fact, being with the home crowd there; being science fiction fans they liked science fiction, they liked science fictional touches, it was a bit easier for me. I wrote them off and on for twenty years really--from 1946 to 1966. I enjoyed it. Not as much as writing a story but...it was not by any means just hackwork. We started to travel quite a bit about that time and I had to quit for that reason.

TANGENT: were you writing much science fiction during that time?

HAMILTON: Oh, yeah. I wrote as much science fiction as I possibly could. I didn't want to give up that market. To me comics were a temporary thing. I was not able to write as much as I wanted but I kept something going all the time. Every now and then I'd let the comics wait and do a short novel.

TANGENT: Leigh, there were very few women writing science fiction during the 30's, 40's, and 50's. Were there any special problems you had to face being a woman?

BRACKETT: There certainly wasn't with me. They all welcomed me with open arms. There were so few of us nuts that they were just happy to receive another lamb into the fold. It was simply that there wasn't many women reading science fiction, not many were interested. Francis Stevens sold very fine science fiction stories to ARGOSY back in 1917 back around that period.

HAMILTON: Her name, you see, could have been a man's name and Leigh's name could have been a man's name; Catherine Moore, who wrote SF long before you did, and a dear friend of ours, wrote under the name of C.L. Moore. Now, I don't think there was much real bias on the part of women's libbers--

BRACKETT: I never ran into any. On some of the first few stories I sold people would write into the letter columns and say Brackett's story was terrible, women can't write science fiction. That was ridiculous, there were scientists you know, there's no problem there. What they were complaining about was the quality really, not...you know. The editor's certainly, there was never any problem with them.

HAMILTON: Hedda Hopper, in her column that she had, went into how Howard Hawkes wanted to do this movie on Raymond Chandler's novel THE BIG SLEEP. Hawkes had picked up this detective story and so he told his agent, you know, this chap would make a good screenwriter on this, so get Mr. Brackett. So in this newspaper column it was reported how astonished he was when this fresh-faced girl that look-

ed like she had just come from a school-girl tennis court suddenly turned up. He gulped and went right on with it (chuckling).

BRACKETT: But no, there was never actually any discrimination against women screenwriters. The first job I ever got was at Republic and the highest paid person on the lot was a woman. The discrimination against women came in later, much later, when television came along with all these male-oriented western series and detective series, and they figured a woman wouldn't be able to write that kind of thing. Which is where the problem came in. Dorothy Fontana gave a very concise, intelligent discussion of that one night out there at UCLA. This is breaking down now. In other words they are reading the script to see if it's a good script and not who wrote it.

TANGENT: What about in science fiction? Has it changed at all?

BRACKETT: As I say, there never was any discrimination as far as I know of, but a great many more women are writing science fiction than ever before.

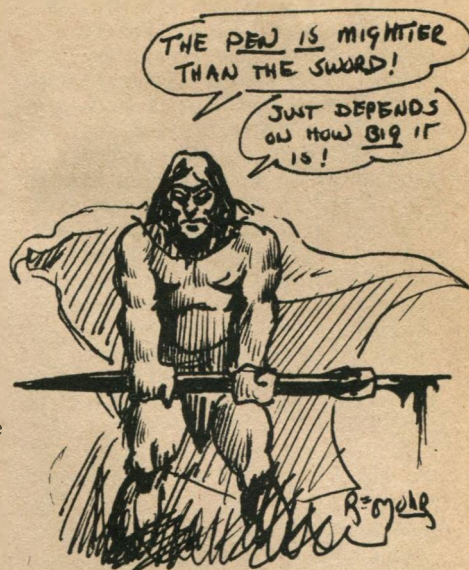
TANGENT: What about the women's libbers in the field now, say Joanna Russ for instance?

BRACKETT: Well, Joanna's got her own ax to grind. She's got her own way of looking at things, but I never worried about it much one way or the other.

TANGENT: It's like she and others assumed the problem existed and are working from there.

BRACKETT: Well, certainly in the science fiction world it never did. It was just that not many women read it. Kate Wilhelm had an interesting answer to that. Somebody asked, at this seminar, why or how she came to get into SF, and she said when they put Sputnik up all of a sudden this became real and she realized this was affecting the world she lived in and the world her children lived in. I wonder if this was typical of a lot of women who were not interested in science fiction until it became something of a reality. You know, until it had a definite effect on themselves and on their futures, that they began to see it in a different light. I don't know if that would apply to any others or not, but certainly there weren't many women reading or writing it in the old days. In fact, this is why they said that the field would never be successful in a broad sense. You know, you didn't have the women readers.

HAMILTON: If I may say so, you have an advantage in that you've always written like a man. You read her



stuff and it's a male type of writing, with all these sword-swinging once in a while, but her, it's all blood and guts (chuckles).

TANGENT: Is that a wish-fulfillment on your part, Leigh?

BRACKETT: (Laughs heartily) Gosh, I hope not. It's the type of thing I always liked to read and it was the only thing I ever wanted to write. I've written things like THE LONG TOMORROW which was not the sword-swinging epic type, but domestic problems always bored me. I mean they bore me personally (chuckles).

HAMILTON: Oh, no no, don't say that.

TANGENT: What other influences did you have besides Burroughs and Merit?

BRACKETT: I'd say Burroughs of course was the first one. I was introduced to Edgar Rice Burroughs at a very young age. And of course I immediately took the plunge and that changed the course of my life right there.

HAMILTON: That was true of nearly all of us of that generation. We sort of grew up on Edgar Rice Burroughs. I had much other science fiction; I totally admired H.G. Wells. But Burroughs seemed to be the one we all tried to model after. I think Ray told us his first story was written because he couldn't -- his family being hard-up at that time -- he couldn't afford to buy the new Burroughs Mars novel that came out. He'd seen it in the bookstores but he couldn't afford to buy it, so he sat down and wrote it.

BRACKETT: I think my first writing effort was somewhat the same. I was a great fan of Douglas Fairbanks, Sr. I saw everyone of his films over and over and over, and just loved Fair-

banks. My favorite was THE MARK OF ZORRO or something, and I wanted a sequel and there wasn't any, so I started writing one on little scraps of paper. Burroughs influenced me more--well, the Mars stories, all my Mars stories came out of Burroughs--I tried never to exactly copy his Mars, I tried to make it my own, but I think my fascination for Mars came from the fascination for his Mars.

Now, Hammett and Chandler were very strong influences, and James Caine, whose style I greatly admired. I tried to use what I considered to be very good and very powerful in the detective story genre and use it in the science fiction. "The Halfling" is very much in the detective story style, which seems to me to work out very nicely.

TANGENT: What do you think of the different awards that have sprung up that they didn't have in the early days? Do you feel a sense of loss or anything since both of you have never won one?

BRACKETT: No. I'm always happy for the people who get the awards. You know, I'd be delighted if I ever got one. I was up for a Hugo once on THE LONG TOMORROW. I don't know...I just don't worry about it.

HAMILTON: I'd be delighted to get one, too. I was also nominated for one, but most of our science fiction has been in the adventure/entertainment scene. If you don't have Big Thinks in it the people who vote on these are not greatly impressed. If they can understand every word of it then it can't be great, you know? That's their attitude.

TANGENT: That seems to be rather paradoxical when you think of how many people today would like to see more space opera or pure adventure or whatever.

HAMILTON: I was reproaching Bob Tucker last night for inventing the term space opera. I told him there had been only one true space opera, and that was a Swedish opera "Aniara".

That's the only opera that's about space. However, I think the thesis of what they call space opera is that the conquest of space would be a great adventure. And anybody who watched Armstrong or Aldrin taking the first steps on the moon or listening to those messages coming in on Apollo 13 when they were in trouble; that was pure space opera.

I was happy to see that all our astronauts all look exactly like they came off old science fiction covers.

TANGENT: Look what happened to the astronauts who've come back from space; one found God, one became neurotic, one is experimenting with parapsychology and so forth. Do you

think we're perhaps not ready for space?

BRACKETT: Oh, I don't think so. I think people who've gone beyond into the unknown, whether it was beyond the Pillars of Hercules or across the Atlantic or wherever, when you get out into the strange and totally unknown--of course this time we're really going out beyond, even our own Earth--but we can cope with it.

HAMILTON: I was interested in the remarks of the astronauts on how beautiful and warm Earth looked like from a distance. This is the feeling I used to try to get into stories, and it was stated in classic form years ago by Bob Heinlein in his story THE GREEN HILLS OF EARTH. He did the ultimate story on that kind of feeling--and that came true. Those remarks could have been taken right out of Bob's story.

TANGENT: What moves you when you write? What do you try to put into your stories?

HAMILTON: I always try to get a little emotion into the fact that you are doing something that nobody has ever done before; removing yourself completely from the planet from which we all have been bound. I've always tried to imagine myself in that position and create the mood as well as I can, because I think that would be a great experience.

When Apollo 12 took off we were there at the launching at Cape Kennedy. We whangled reporter's passes so we could sit up close. We were just a bit dashed when we heard the President and Vice-President weren't that close. They said they didn't want to risk them--but they sure will risk me! (laughing) But it was a tremendous experience you know, after having been involved in all this since the 20's to see it actually happening. This one was more dramatic than most because when it went up it was hit twice by great lightning bolts. They were in doubt up until the last moment whether they would launch it or not because they had some storm activity. Leigh turned over to me and said, "Somebody out there doesn't want them."

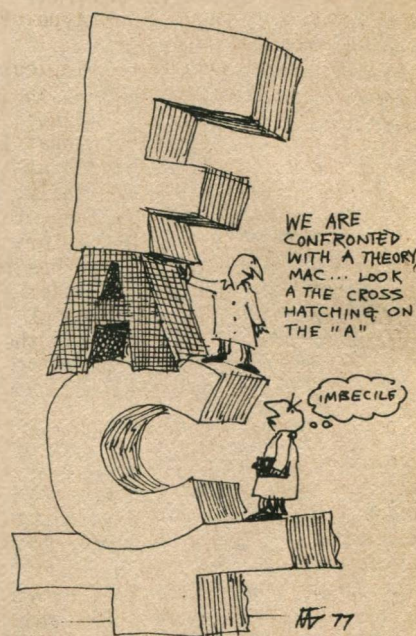
BRACKETT: You know, it was just a static discharge. But they did lose total power for a full minute and they had a near squeak on that one.

TANGENT: When you began writing back in the 20's did you ever dream that technology would progress so quickly you would be able to see that?

HAMILTON: I didn't think it would happen in my lifetime. A chap came from Sweden to visit us last winter--he was in this country on a journal-

istic tour--and he belonged to a club in Sweden called THE CAPTAIN FUTURE CLUB. He had read those Captain Future stories I wrote--which were really written for teenagers--he was asking me about this very point and I said sometime long after I'm gone it surely will be done, but he pointed out to me that in Captain Future I said the first moonlanding would be in 1970...which was pretty close. And he said, "Didn't you believe that?" And I said I don't think I really did. But I was trying to bring within comprehension of those science fiction readers that the year 2000 seems as remote as all hell, drop it down thirty years to 1970 and it's a bit easier to comprehend it. (Chuckling) It shattered his faith a little bit, but...

One of those chaps tried to send along with Apollo 11, the first moon-



landing, a Captain Future novel. He wrote endless letters to NASA saying, "This is the way it will be, this should go along!" (Laughing) "A copy of Captain Future on the Moon!"

BRACKETT: They wrote back and told him they were sorry but they didn't have room.

TANGENT: To talk on the other side of the coin now; do you think science fiction should have a role or function in society? What part does it play?

HAMILTON: That's a hard question to answer. I would say that offhand... no. But there has been some science fictional satire in the past that has helped to bring about real social changes. I wouldn't want to be dogmatic either way about it.

BRACKETT: I think science fiction is

such an enormously broad term that it includes so many things. I think actually the entire field has had a social impact in that it has prepared--subliminally, almost--a generation to believe in space-flight, to believe in technological advances. They have a much wider view of the universe than they had,

HAMILTON: I think we have had a part at least in familiarizing the idea of going into space, because when I was a youngster people would say, "I'd as soon do that as go to the moon," or "I'd as soon do this as fly to the moon." You don't hear that anymore. For a long time you haven't heard of it. That was the ultimate in impossibility.

TANGENT: What interests you now the most in science fiction?

BRACKETT: I'm interested mainly in never trying to mold the field into one particular thing. I think it should be free to have every type of thinking, every type of story. I think you should have the ecological stories, the political stories, the Big Think type of story. I mean, what anybody wants to write. What I hate to see are the occasional attempts that are made, periodically, none of them ever last very long, to mold the field into one particular thing, and say science fiction has to be such and such and so. In other words, just what I happen to think science fiction should be. It's the one field that you cannot really whack down into one simple thing--

TANGENT: What about John Campbell?

HAMILTON: Yes, he did try to do that, and that is one of the chief reasons I didn't like to work for John Campbell. I sent him one story and never again. He bought it, but I could not subordinate every idea I had into the Campbell formula. Added to which, he didn't particularly like his writers to be writing for the lesser science fiction magazines. Damn few could make a living writing for John Campbell.

I admired Campbell. I testified to this the other night when we were talking about the old days. In fact, he was one of the great pulp magazine editors. Yet, science fiction did not begin with John Campbell. There were other editors, who may not have had as big an influence, although I think Tremaine was right up with Campbell there, in the early ASTOUNDING STORIES. But, Campbell had kind of a dogmatic, rigorous mind; it has to be this way or that way, but it can't be that way. He was a difficult chap to work for. She sold her first stories to him.

BRACKETT: And I still don't know why he bought them. They weren't very good stories. Unless he hoped he was discovering a new writer. Unfortun-

ately I didn't go the right direction. I kept trying to sell him things because he was the top market, but when you wrote a Campbell-type story and it didn't sell then you had no place else to go with it. He rejected one of mine rather viciously, so I decided it was a waste of time and never--

HAMILTON: He was a very stiff, odd, portly sort of a chap. I never sent him a story after 1938 because I had to revise that one. First to suit John's idea, and then to suit John's wife's idea. That was a little hard to do, so I never sent John any more stories.

Sprague de Camp told me a few years later that he's always been irked with me because I didn't send him any more stories. And I told Sprague that he no doubt wanted the pleasure or rejecting them. When I'd see John at science fiction conventions we were somehow always the invisible people; he couldn't quite see us. Several years ago I saw him sitting at a convention and I walked over and said to him, "What the hell's the matter with you John, you can't see any more. We were still friends before you ever edited that bloody magazine. What is this, anyway?" And just stammered, "Uh, uh, uh." But I think he was glad I had broken the ice because he didn't want to carry on this thing much longer. And I was glad I had too, because he only lived a couple of years longer. After all this long freeze we'd had we ended up with our arms around each other, and he turned to me and said, "Ed, we old-timers have got to stick together." (Chuckling)

BRACKETT: One big trouble I had trying to sell to Campbell was of course the fact that I did not have any great scientific or engineering background. And this is one thing he insisted on in his stories, and I admit uh, Ed had a great background in physics and electrical engineering that I didn't have, and I tried to make up for it by writing a new type of story. But it was just not Campbell's type of story.

HAMILTON: When Ray tried to get scientific once (laughing)--

BRACKETT: He had this story where he had written 'hundreds and hundreds of degrees below zero' and somebody wrote in and said, "Ray, haven't you ever heard of absolute zero?" And he said, "No, what's that?" (Laughing) Now of course I don't think Ray ever sold to Campbell--

HAMILTON: He never sold but he tried like anything.

BRACKETT: As I recall it, ASTOUNDING was a brilliant magazine too, in those days. You had the young Heinlein, the young Sprague de Camp, A.E.

Van Vogt; they were all starting out in writing and wrote beautiful brilliant stuff. It wasn't until some years later that Campbell got a little fossilized and the magazine got a little fossilized, it seemed to me.

HAMILTON: Oh, no doubt about it. He wanted all of us to write for him in the early days. He was anxious to get the magazine on a firm footing and he had a wide acquaintance with all of us old-timers. He was one himself. He became, oh let's say, the Pope of science fiction. He felt his position very keenly. And as I said, he got to the point where he didn't like his writers to write anything for these inferior science fiction magazines.

BRACKETT: And he alienated quite a few of them by getting off onto these kicks. He went off on the psionics kick and for awhile there it looked like all the stories were cut from the same bolt of cloth. Then he got into the Dianetics thing, with L. Ron Hubbard and Scientology.

HAMILTON: Remember he demonstrated the Heironymous Machine? That's silly stuff. And so everybody was much pained by this. In fact, at Peterborough in England we were at a convention and some of those who attended were making some bitter remarks about him and this nonsense, and I got kind of angry at this despite the fact that John couldn't 'see' me any more, so I got up and made a passionate defense of him. And I said, "He's the trunk of the whole science fiction tree and you've kissed his feet for years, and now because he has a momentary aberration on this matter why are you all turning on him?"

It was unfair. It was dirty pool. They went around licking his cuffs all of the time and then they turned on him. But anyway, he didn't like his writers writing for the inferior science fiction magazines. The only two writers who could write for the inferior science fiction magazines all the time were Murray Leinster and Henry Kuttner. Murray, of course, was an absolute pro. He could write anything for anybody. I used to ask Henry, "How do you do that? Do you slant your stories for ASTOUNDING?" He said, "No. I never slant a thing." I'll bet he unconsciously slanted them.

BRACKETT: Oh, you know it. When you definitely feel you are going to write a story for somebody whether you sit down and say I'm going to slant it or not, in the back of your mind that little quiet censor is back there; you sit down and do it a certain way, because if you didn't you know it's not going to come out right.

TANGENT: Were the pulps ever taken seriously by critics?

HAMILTON: They were, as a whole, cheap lowdown magazines and nobody cared much what was printed in them, but they gave science fiction a chance to expand its wings into all kinds of ideas. If you were writing for THE SATURDAY EVENING POST you found all kinds of taboos, whereas in the pulps, which few people cared about, anything went, just so long as it was effective. I think they were very good.

The only time a serious critic paid any attention to the science fiction magazines was in 1930. A famous British essayist of that time, William Balithoe ((Sp?)) came to New York to write articles for THE NEW YORK WORLD about the American scene. He was absolutely fascinated by the pulp science fiction magazines and he wrote a beautiful article, on that long ago day, on the pulp science fiction magazines. He was probably the first serious critic to mention Lovecraft's name. He said Mr. Lovecraft was a lot better than most of the serious novelists that they gave acclaim to. He added that a man who could read Galsworthy about society and Arnold Bennett about marriage and who can't read these crude little magazines is completely unliterary, without realizing it. And he ended up predicting; he said someday these magazines, or the tattered copies of them that remain, will sell for more money than the first editions of our most famous novelists of today. And that is true.

TANGENT: In THE BIG SLEEP, Leigh, there's always a question Bogart fans seem to ask: whatever happened to the chauffeur? He just dropped out about halfway through.

BRACKETT: The whole thing is confusing; the novel is confusing. I was down at the set one day and Bogart asked me who killed Owen Taylor, the chauffeur, and I said I didn't

know, and they asked Bogart and he didn't know, and Hawkes said let's send Chandler a wire and find out, and his answer came back, "I don't know." It's a very confusing plot and one of my favorite novels because the forward momentum is so tremendous and the characters are so interesting that you really don't care.

HAMILTON: THE BIG SLEEP appeared in the summer of 1946. I was assiduously playing court to this young lady, and so I was living with my sister in Arcadia and I had to go all the way downtown--not having a car at that time--to see that. Well, I got in on the middle of that damn picture, and let me tell you... it's confusing enough when you get in on the beginning of that picture. But the picture improves; by that I mean that when you overcome all the mindboggling difficulties with plot and so on--- I liked it better than I ever used to. It really had a beautiful tempo.

TANGENT: What was it like working with William Faulkner? I've heard a lot about his peculiarities.

BRACKETT: Well, he did used to disappear in the middle of a script from time to time. It didn't bother me because in any real sense we didn't work together. This was my first big job, I had had one job at Republic a month or so before doing a thing called THE VAMPIRE'S GHOST and I was three weeks on the script with another writer, and they shot the film in ten days and that was two days over schedule (laughing). They fired the cameraman after the second day because he was taking too much time. But uh, it was not the greatest film ever made.

So then this thing was dropped in my lap because Howard had read the book and liked the dialogue and put me under contract, and I'm making this thing with Humphrey Bogart, who, you know, is my favorite actor, and William Faulkner's already on the script. I walk in, you know, feeling about this big ((Puts thumb and forefinger an inch apart)) and I think how in the world am I going to work with Faulkner. Well, there was no problem. He greeted me courteously. He put the book down and said, "We will do alternate sections. You will do these chapters and I will do these chapters," and so on. But that's the way he wanted it done. He turned around and walked into his office and I never saw him again, except to say good morning. He lived behind a wall eight feet thick. I think you could have worked with that man for ten years and never known him. He had a few close friends... He did, he disappeared occasion ally.

HAMILTON: There was one story about the time they pulled him out of a gutter in Paris.

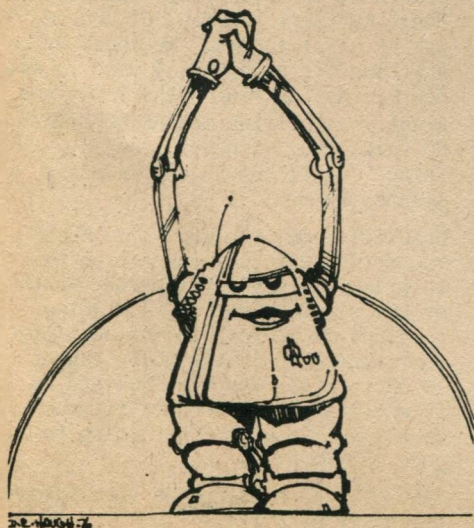
BRACKETT: Yeah. He was doing LAND OF THE PHAROUGHS in Paris and went on one of these tremendous benders, and he was just a mess. He'd been rolled, beaten up, all his money, his passport, was gone. He was so upset about the whole thing he sat down for weeks and worked like a demon at the typewriter. But uh, he had a problem. But his secretary loved him. See, he was actually on loan from the studio. Now I worked for Hawkes, I didn't have to check myself in and out through the front gate. Not now, but in those days a writer came in at 9:30 and left at 5:30 and they checked you in and out and don't take too much time for lunch. But anyway, I was over in the Hawkes bungalow, I came in the side gate, but Faulkner had to come in the other gate and on these days when he'd be absent his secretary would call and say, "Mr. Faulkner's just checked in," and everybody covered for him. He was a charming gentleman, it was just that you never got close to him.

TANGENT: Concerning your script for ELDORADO and the movie RIO BRAVO, was it a direct rewrite of the original script? How did that come about?

BRACKETT: ELDORADO was a direct rewrite of RIO BRAVO. This is a long sad story. I wrote, what was to my way of thinking, the best script I had ever done in my life. It wasn't tragic, but it was one of those things where Wayne died at the end. I sent it out to Howard and he said he loved it, it was great, and the studio loves it, Duke loves it, it's great. Fine. So I'm feeling all warm and happy and I go out to do the final polish on it and it turns out we're not going to do it at all, really. And the more we got into doing RIO BRAVO over again the sicker I got, because I hate doing things over again. And I kept saying to Howard I did that, and he'd say it was okay, we could do it over again.

On one scene I said, "You did that scene. I'm not going to write those lines again." It's where the girl comes into town, she gets off the stage, and blah blah blah. And I said to him, "I'm not going to do it again." And he said, "Why not? It was good once it'll be just as good again." And Duke looked down at me from about eight feet high and said, "That's right. If it was good once...it'll be just as good again." (Laughing) I knew I was licked right there, so all I could do was try to do it again. But, you know, the guy that signs the final check has the final say.

TANGENT: Would you tell us a little



bit about the new television pilot you're doing?

BRACKETT: It's the first science fiction job I've ever had in Hollywood. I don't think that most people out here even know I write science fiction because few of them seem to read it. So this is my first time since 1944 that I've done science fiction...out there. This is a proposed new anthology series which will be in the general nature of THE TWILIGHT ZONE, where they get somebody to be the host as Rod Serling was. But there will be individual stories each week, and I am doing the pilot episode. The name of the program will be called THEATRE OF THE UNKNOWN and the name of my particular segment is called "The Day the Men Went Mad." That was Lou Hunter's title at NBC. I just gave them the idea. I'm supposed to have the first draft to them in early June; they're in a hurry to get started with it, so...

TANGENT: Isn't there a controversy concerning the fact that the anthology series seem to have higher quality, whereas the series with the continuing characters seem to be much more successful?

BRACKETT: Well, this is an old controversy. It's very, very difficult to put over an anthology show. In fact, I like them myself. After all, POLICE STORY is an anthology...that does very nicely. I think they worry too much about it. If you have a good show---if the individual segments of the thing are good---I think, personally, it would draw just as well as anything else.

I hope, in this thing I'm doing, they'll let me keep a little of the science fiction in it. They keep shying away from it, it's too esoteric for them, they think the audience would be confused. So they want me to keep it on a more mundane level, "Let's do some science fiction but let's keep both feet firmly on the ground." (Chuckling)

TANGENT: What do you have in the works now, Leigh?

BRACKETT: I'm working on the fourth Eric John Stark novel. We finish with Skaith with this third one. Both Eric John and I have had enough with that planet, and I think we're going to move on to something else. We're starting a whole new world.

TANGENT: Tentative title?

BRACKETT: It doesn't have one yet. I'm still in the feeling around stages.

TANGENT: Ed, are you working on anything right now?

HAMILTON: Very little. I'm picking away at the beginning of a very long novel, but it's more of an excuse to

say I'm working than anything else (Chuckles). The fact is, I was out of the running for a couple of years with a sickness. When I was recuperating in the hospital I wrote the first half of this story with a pencil and pad. This was Harlan Ellison's story for THE FINAL DANGEROUS VISIONS. What he wanted was a collaboration between Leigh and myself; you know, a formal collaboration. The story is called "Stark and The Star Kings" and if I may say what's funny about it; the first half of it I wrote and it's all about Stark. She wrote the part about The Star Kings.

BRACKETT: He's paid us for it, but he had some problems with his publisher. That's what is taking the darn book so long to come out.

TANGENT: You mentioned this as your first formal collaboration. Why have you never collaborated before; in what ways were you an influence on each other's work, and was there any feeling of competition between you?

BRACKETT: No.

HAMILTON: No, I don't feel that. Our collaboration has been more or less unofficial in this sense...she has done more for me than I have done for her. For years I worked on comics and I had a pretty heavy schedule. When I'd be trying to do a story I'd call her over and say, "Leigh, nobody can do a scene like this but you." (Laughing) But I never was as fortunate as Henry Kuttner. We were out visiting Henry and Catherine at Laguna Beach, and he was telling me he'd been having a hard time doing a novel; one chapter defeated him. And he sat there at his desk all day beating his brains out and couldn't get that chapter started, so he thought he'd go out and walk up and down the beach and get some air and something would come to him. So he walked up and down the beach for several hours. The air was good but he got no ideas. So he walked wearily back to the house, got sat down, and there was the chapter, all written there beside his typewriter.

(Laughing) I love to tell that story, so then I can accuse her. Actually, that was the best chapter in the book. It was a detective novel called THE BRASS RING. When I talked to him just after the novel had been published, I said, "It was a good story, Henry, but the crowning point is the chapter where the man is murdered in the dark. You get the feeling of violence and sudden death in the dark. Terrific." He said, "Thank you. My wife wrote it."

I said the same thing to Doc Lowndes up in New York years ago. He said there was one part in my VALLEY OF CREATION that was the highest point in the book. I told him the

same thing. "Thank you for nothing. My wife wrote it." She wrote just those three chapters (chuckling).

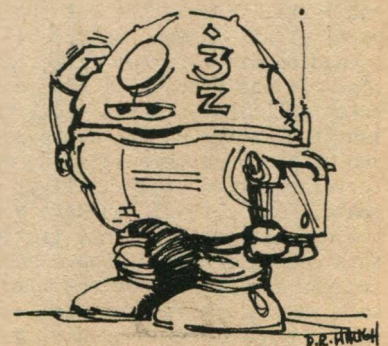
TANGENT: I'd like for each of you to give some thoughts on what you think of science fiction today. Gripes, feelings, trends, etc.

BRACKETT: I would hate to see the field become introverted; to see it become kind of an in-joke where everybody's using each other's stuff... writing for each other, instead of the public...which can happen. I hope it will always retain that openness and freedom to move in any direction. You have new talent coming out all the time; you have new ideas, great new paths. And I think this is good. I would hate to see anything happen to it to close it in.

HAMILTON: Some years ago the late Schuyler Miller, writing in ASTOUNDING, I think, warned of that danger. He pointed out that the detective story had almost gotten itself into a strait jacket; the mystery story around 1930 when the rules were laid down, where things must be done this way or that way. By the late 20's they were trying to formalize it. And then along came Chandler and Hammett and broke all the rules and gave it new life.

BRACKETT: Remember that ultimately though, the editor, whether a book has a beginning, a middle, and an end---or has none of these---will not buy it if it does not sell. That is the final word on what editors eventually do.

Remember in the 50's there was a particularly vocal group in the science fiction community that impressed all the editors in New York that science fiction had changed, it was totally different, and now it's this and nothing else. And they tried publishing this kind of thing and the magazines died. Remember Howard Browne's "Folks I'm Bleeding" editorial? It was like there aren't enough of you out there to keep the magazine going and I've just got to publish the stuff that sells. It eventually settles itself that way.





HAMILTON: Of course with these 'revolutions' in science fiction it always comes out to about the same thing. Somebody comes along and breaks all the rules, and they're successful at it, like Hammett and Chandler did long ago in the detective story. Ray Bradbury I think was good for the field in that sense. What he was writing was not science fiction, but it was so damn good it had to be included in science fiction. I think you'll always have this cycle, where somebody tries to formalize it, and becomes High Priest or Priestess of the Cult, and as you say, Leigh, it becomes an in-joke. People can have a delightful time writing for each other but they lose the public. That doesn't mean you have to pander to low taste, it just means that science fiction ought to have a thousand different doors to go through and not be confined to anybody's idea.

BRACKETT: I suppose most of my stuff would be called escape fiction. This is the type of stuff I love to read; it got me into the field. If I were 8 or 9 or 10 years old I don't think I would be terribly impressed by the esoteric, heavy-thinking types of science fiction, but---

HAMILTON: Last winter I was rereading Wells' *THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU* and I still think that was the high point of all fantasy because it succeeded on at least two different levels. It was a powerful satire. It makes *GULLIVER'S TRAVELS* look childish as a satire on the human race, and at the same time it's the most terrific action story, full of suspense. And yet, if you have a narrow definition of science fiction this couldn't possibly have been done because the science of the time was such that all these surgical wonders couldn't have been possible, and so

you would have lost a great story.

(Pointing to a fanzine with a photo in it) But this chap here, William Hope Hodgson, he had the most supreme imagination in his stories even though he had some awful faults in them. His stuff is hard to read, dreadful, and yet the world would be poorer without him, because he broke every rule...

BRACKETT: I would hate to think of a world in which there was no *THE WORM OUROBOROS*.

TANGENT: So science fiction is a literature of ideas, no matter how they are expressed?

BRACKETT: I would say so. There's room for everything.

HAMILTON: It all comes down to the poem:

"There are nine and ninety ways
Of constructing tribal lays
And every single one of them
is right."

BRACKETT: I was just going to say that if you have some very powerful idea that is of special significance, literary significance, or any other sort of significance, and you really must tell the story, for heaven's sake tell it and tell it as well as you can, and make it as fine a story on all levels as you possibly can. But I dislike the idea that you can't write anything unless you have that flag up saying Significance.

HAMILTON: Where writers seem to get caught in a dilemma in the science fiction world, is when they try to decide whether they'll be entertainers or serious writers. Remember the monkey in *DR. MOREAU* that had Big Thinks? He didn't think Small Thinks about water and game and nuts and fruit...he had Big Thinks. And when the hero came back to London and went into the Church it seemed to him that the people were gabbling Big Thinks. (Chuckling) That was a cruel satire.

BRACKETT: I think even the most flagrant escapist fiction is not entertaining unless it makes at least an attempt to have real people in it. I mean unless you get into the emotions of the people and try to present it like something that would really happen. Like, one of the main fascinations of science fiction to me has always been the aliens. What other fields can you get into a totally alien mind, and play with all these different worlds and social setups.

One of the really great stories on alien mentality was "Saurian Valedictory" but I've forgotten who wrote it.

HAMILTON: Norman something-or-other was his name. It was in Tremaine's *ASTOUNDING*. It was a brilliant achievement and nobody seems to have

heard of it, or him. It was an attempt to depict a reptilian civilization before Man. It succeeded triumphantly...the values were all so different, the psychology. I've been trying to reprint that for years. I tried to get August Derleth to reprint it, but... I think I'm the only one who likes it.

BRACKETT: No you're not. I'm the other one.

TANGENT: Are there going to be any more volumes of *THE BEST OF PLANET STORIES*?

BRACKETT: I haven't talked to Judy-Lynn about it lately. She said, early on this year, that there might be one more on toward the end of the year, but I don't know if they're thinking that way or not. We're waiting to see how the first one sold.

HAMILTON: We are doing the *BEST OF* each other, however. I'm doing *THE BEST OF LEIGH BRACKETT*, the second one to come out---the reply you might call it. So she's got to be very careful in her introduction; I've got the last word you see (laughing).

BRACKETT: You were asking how living and working together affected us. We almost broke up our happy home I think right after we were married. I had an order for a 40,000 word novel from *STARTLING STORIES* and I said, "I think I've got an idea for an opening." And he said fine. So we figured if we collaborated we could do the stories twice as fast, write twice as many and make twice as much money. You know, which we didn't have much of at that time. So I went out in the kitchen and pounded the typewriter and came back in with a couple of chapters and I said, "What do you think of it?" He read it, said it was great, but where do you go from here? I said, "I don't know." He looked at me, said, "You don't know! This is the so-and-so bleep adjective deleted way to write a story I ever heard of!" (Laughing) He used to write the last line of the story before he'd ever write the first one.

HAMILTON: That's just a fetish of mine. That is to say, the last word you speak to the reader, the last impression, is the last line of the story. I used to plot my adventure stories very carefully and she was used to just sitting down and writing.

BRACKETT: Right. And I would get stuck half-way through.

HAMILTON: You had a lot of unfinished stories.

BRACKETT: Yes, I did.

HAMILTON: What is funny about it is that as years have gone by, she now plans her stories quite well, whereas I don't plan at all. But that, of course, is your unconscious. That is

to say, from the long decades of experience, I've learned to avoid the line that will lead me into a trap, so I plan it without thinking about it.

BRACKETT: I never could plan beyond the sequence I was doing at the time.

HAMILTON: That Duvian (chuckling). I wouldn't have been a bit surprised to get the breakfast plate in my face.

BRACKETT: This was in THE SEA KINGS OF MARS, which was the original title of THE SWORD OF RHIANNON. I was sailing along, and I got about halfway through the thing and I'd get two or three pages ahead and then I'd fall back and try another way, and it was one of those things where now I'd know when something's gone wrong back in the beginning, but...I was just beating my head against the wall and finally I told Ed, "See if you can figure out what's wrong here." He read it and said, "Back here in chapter four you should have put a Duvian here on the ship." And I looked at him with this look on my face GRRR! But he was right. That's what hurt. I had to throw all that out and go back and do it over again.

TANGENT: Well, how about telling Ray Bradbury hello and to come up and see you people Real Soon Now.

BRACKETT: Well, yes, I hope that Ray and Maggie would get up to see us in Lancaster. They better get that Jagewar up that freeway next time we're out there.

HAMILTON: Ray doesn't drive you know, he's got the same problem I do; we both have eye trouble. The LOS ANGELES TIMES prints quite a little bit about him from time to time. He's one of the personages of LA now, and they had an article about people who don't drive that featured Ray. He goes around on his bicycle. And it's the biggest piece of BS you ever read (laughing). He bought his wife a nice big 12 cylinder Jagewar and she takes him all over town. But the bicycle's just for show.

BRACKETT: (With hands cupped toward the mike) If you're listening, Ray, he's just kidding. (Laughing)

HAMILTON: He was working one time out at MGM, and he told us, "I uh, ride down there every morning but I have great trouble---they just don't know where to park my bicycle in the parking lot." And Maggie looked at him and said, "That makes a nice story. I'll add the rest of it. He rides down there because it's all down hill, all the way. I have to go down in the station wagon and we have to put his bicycle on top of it, and I drive him back up."

LAUGHTER FROM ALL.

MONOLOG CONTINUED FROM PAGE FIVE

are so successful; they don't care if they're caught or not.

Thanks to the SFR reader who sent back an inadvertant second copy of SFR #16 I'd sent him, and no thanks for the penciled note on the top of the copy, thereby making it unuseable. BUT also thanks for the recent copy of THE ECONOMIST (a U.K. magazine).

Generally speaking, if a reader of SFR receives two issues of the magazine due to subscription confusion or other similar goof, I ask you not to bother returning the extra copy. A card mentioning the situation will be gratefully received, however.

BOOK RECEIVED

LEFT OF AFRICA by Hal Clement.
\$8.00 , hardcover, from PDA Enterprises, Box 8010, New Orleans, LA 70182.

Comment: A small-press effort, well done, of a limited (less than 700 copies) edition.

A story set in the time of Carthage, it involves a boy in many adventures on sea and land, and deals with a great scientific discovery of the time. This story would have been science fiction 3000 years ago.

The numerous illustrations by Dany Frolich suit the book and the story very well.

THE ONLY THING THAT KEEPS ME FROM
BEING PARANOID IS MY NEED TO KEEP
THOSE WHO ARE PLOTTING AGAINST ME
OFF THEIR GUARD.

SFR 20 was delivered this afternoon. 5000 copies, as usual, and a good job, too. The Fabian cover looks fine. Now to spend the next few evenings stuffing envelopes while watching TV.

1-22-77 Just look what has happened. I turned my back for a few days to tend to the mailing of SFR 20, and the books and magazines took the opportunity to flood the place.

You may well ask why it takes me four days to envelope, address, sort and sack around 2000 copies of this magazine. I asked myself that, too. With the Elliott addressing machine I have, using the Elliott stencil system, it takes 45 minutes to process about 70-80 copies. It has be-

come an ordeal, and one of the reasons I was thinking of limiting the subscription lists to 2000 copies.

Then in the mail a few days ago came a folder describing the Scrip-tomatic addressing system which uses a card/analine dye automatic feed machine...

Enthralled, I went to see the thing at a local business machine place, and went home and spent a few hours working out systems in my head and procedures and time trials and came up with an 8-hour day to do the whole mailing, and another day to do the bookstore mailing.

There's only one catch: it'll involve one hell of a lot of work to convert to the new way: mostly retyping all that subscriber address and subber records info onto the cards from the stencils.

And the machine I will be buying costs a tad less than one thousand dollars. *Gulp* But, after all, what is an inheritance for, if not to spend on one's business/hobby? Thank you, dad.

While my back was turned I see Jimmy Carter was inaugurated as the 39th President of the United States, and that in spite of what he said about wanting simplicity and a low profile inauguration, it still was on a par with a Coronation.

As a people, we seem to have a need for a King, in these last forty years...or an Emperor. Clearly the people responded by forming and participating in that inaugural parade. I got the impression of a regent reviewing the representatives of the provinces. In this case the 50 states.

And of course politicians cannot help taking every opportunity to give themselves and their kind as much importance and Image as possible.

May I point out that Carter is only the chief executive? All that pomp and circumstance was not for a chief executive, it was for a New Sun God.

The stock market celebrated his ascendancy by dropping ten points.

Clearly I've got to get to the books and magazines now, but first
A BOOK REVIEW BY REG

A WREATH OF STARS by Bob Shaw
Doubleday, \$5.95

This is Bob's finest book so far.

'It's the summer of 1993 as millions around the world stare incredulously into the sky---aided by the newly invented Amplite Glasses---at Thornton's Planet heading uncomfortably close to the Earth. Designed to enable man to see in darkness, the Amplite Glasses illuminate a

mysterious world of anti-neutrino matter, of which Thornton's Planet is composed.

'By the spring of 1996, the visitor from infinity has come and gone, turning out to be little more than an astronomical curiosity. But then they appear.... Small luminous domes, with two eyes near the top, a third hole which might be a nose and, very close to the bottom, a slitted mouth, twisting and writhing...

'As these alien apparitions materialize before dumbfounded wearers of the ever-popular Amplit lenses, only a handful of people realize that an entire anti-neutrino planet coexists in another dimension of the Earth.'

But above all this is the story of Gilbert Snook, a loner who at bottom doesn't want to be alone anymore. He is the central actor in a dangerous drama set in a small African dictatorship where the other-dimensional aliens and their planet first appear, rising, in a deep level diamond mine.

Enter a Noted Astronomer and a lovely young woman investigator from UNESCO. End Gilbert's life of non-involvement.

Add ruthless, savage soldiers, a near-rape, killing, intrigue... Add the fact that Gilbert is marginally telepathic and it is discovered that he can link with one of the aliens...

But it is Bob's adult treatment, his characterizations, his ability to make-real with ring-true detail and dialog and insights which make this novel superior. It is one damn fine reading experience.

I want to compliment John Cayea for the fine dust jacket illustration; a scratchboard in brown, white, green, blue and black that superbly captures the essence of the book.

BOOKS RECEIVED

SUPERMIND by A.E. van Vogt
DAW UY1275, \$1.25

Earth is almost ready for inclusion in the galaxy-wide federation of intelligences, but a hunted group of Dreegh (life-force and blood-drinker vampires) come upon Earth and prepare to gorge. It is, however, a trap set by a supremely intelligent Great Galactic (IQ 10,000)...

I'm reading this now, and am captured. Van Vogt's technique is fascinating.

NAKED TO THE STARS by Gordon R. Dickson. DAW UW1278, \$1.50

A 1961 novel reprinted.

'It is the story of a star soldier who, during a battle against a non-human foe on a far planet, somehow lost sixteen hours from his mem-

ory. Discharged for the potential danger those lost hours might have programmed, Cal Truant made it his fixation to uncover the mystery buried in his mind--to find out what had happened in those missing hours--and block the peril it might present to his fellow troopers, to his war command, and to the planet for which they fought---Earth.'

Sounds good. I don't recall reading it before.

It is now 7:15 and I shall type until about 9:00, whereupon I shall watch RICCO with Dean Martin (as a hotshot defense lawyer, for God's sake. Talk about incredible casting!) or the usual CBS comedies. Where were we? Oh, yes, the BOOKS RECEIVED. I am blundering about



like this because I have two glasses of wine in me, and.... Well, one glass of Safeway Port (19% alcohol) and one glass of Geis wine... (about 12%). Also, I should finish typing the invoices for the bookstores. Sunday promises to be a day of Curses. Onward.

DRINKING SAPHIRE WINE by Tanith Lee
DAW UY1277, \$1.25

Interesting question: who decides, and why, that this original, and the van Vogt original is to be priced at \$1.25, while the Dickson reprint is priced at \$1.50?

Lee's previous novel, DON'T BITE THE SUN set the scene for this novel. So the bacover says. I've tried sampling these novels, but can't get hooked.

You want a reaction to Tanith Lee's prose? Shallow, fast-paced dialog (of which there is a lot of) and self-consciously adult, which

makes it smart-aleck juvenile. But she has her admirers, so....

She has invented a whole slang language which has to be defined in a glossary.

This one is about a he/she human thrown out of a future heaven-like city, who fights back and triumphs over the robots.

THE JEWEL IN THE SKULL by Michael Moorcock, DAW UY1276, \$1.25

The first volume in the Rune-staff series. I think DAW is reprinting a lot of Moorcock's former Lancer books, with revisions by the author.

'Dorian Hawkmoon, late the Duke of Koln, fell under the power of the Runestaff, a mysterious artifact more ancient than Time itself. His destiny, shaped by a vengeful oath sworn by the maddened Baron Meliadus of the Dark Empire, pitted Hawkmoon in battle against his own allies and forced him, by the Black Jewel embedded in his skull, to betray his very heritage.'

Yeah, that sounds heavy. I hope I have time to try this one.

DOORWAYS IN THE SAND by Roger Zelazny. Avon 32086, \$1.50

I read this when it was serialized in ANALOG last year. Published in hardback by Harper & Row.

I thought this one was too tongue-in-cheek, but most readers like it.

'Likeable Fred Cassidy is an eternal undergraduate. All he thinks he knows about the star-stone is that it came to Earth in an interplanetary trade for the Mona Lisa and the British Crown Jewels.

'Then Fred is accused of stealing the cosmic artifact, and he is pursued from Australia to Greenwich Village and beyond, by telepathic psychologists, extraterrestrial hoodlums, and galactic police in disguise; as he enters multiple realities, flipping in and out of alien perspectives, through doorways in the sand.'

But for my money, TODAY WE CHOOSE FACES is Roger's best recent novel.

THE DEVIL IN IRON by Robert E. Howard. Donald M. Grant, \$15.00
With six full page, full-color plates by Dan Green.

This is the fifth in a series of beautifully bound and illustrated Conan adventures. These are limited editions and Investments, as well as a good read, if you like the REH style of melodramatic purplish prose. He was a natural storyteller.

UFO'S: THE EXTRAUNIVERSAL CONNECTION by Roy C. Jarnagin. Exposition, \$6.50.

Jarnagin thinks he has found a possible link between the Bermuda

Triangle, the Black Hole Theory, and the von Daniken hypothesis that Earth was visited by astronauts in prehistoric times.

Another IF and MAYBE book, for those as want to believe. And, believe me, believe is the operative word. George Berkeley (1685-1753) thought of this first.

NEW VOICES IN SCIENCE FICTION Edited by George R. R. Martin. Macmillan, \$8.95.

Six stories by Campbell Award nominees. There is an introduction by Ben Bova.

"The Family Monkey" by Lisa Tuttle.

"Kingmakers" by Robert Thurston.

"The Stone City" by George R. R. Martin.

"To Ceremmark" by Ruth Berman.

"Mom's Differentials" by George Alec Effinger.

"Silent Leges" by Jerry Pournelle.

COMMENT: The only story Campbell would have bought for ASTOUNDING/ANALOG is the Jerry Pournelle. Ruth Berman's story of two writers inhabiting their own story by means of magic would have had a good chance at UNKNOWN. George R. R. Martin's effort was fine until he avoided an ending.

Pournelle's story of idealism and illusion bonking its head against reality and finally coming to its senses on an alien planet after future Earth "justice", indentured servitude, and a rough experience with a mercenary military force is probably his best effort to date.

The other stories seemed indulgent, trite, obscure and/or too thin to carry the weight of all them words.

THERE ARE OTHER BOOKS WAITING, but I'll put them off to make some SMALL PRESS NOTES

Some of the best interviews being printed are those in TANGENT, by its editor and publisher, David A. Truesdale. In the Winter, 77 issue he presents conversations with Ben Bova, Alfred Bester, and Joe Halderman. All fine, relaxed, unselfconscious, all revealing and rich in insights and information.

The rest of the magazine is so-so.

\$1.50 per copy from 611-A Division St., Oshkosh, WI 54901

STARLING is comics and music oriented in addition to sf, and the standout item, for me, in the Dec. 76 issue is a fine article by Rick Dey: "Bottoms Up--A Tribute to Thorne Smith."

50¢ from Hank & Lesleigh Luttrell, 525 W. Main St., Madison, WI 53703.

Bruce Gillespie makes me so TIRED! And envious. He has just mimeographed a combined issue of SF COMMENTARY (#48-49-50), a mere 146 pages, and, not surprisingly, is saying that for sure the next issue is to be offset. It has to be--his fingers is worn to the bone.

SFC is probably THE sf zine in the world devoted to Criticism and Analysis and Discussion of sf. The price for this monster issue is probably \$3.60 by International money order, or send to his agents in the USA: H&L Luttrell, address same as for STARLING above.

Bruce lives down under at: GPO Box 5195AA, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, Australia.



BACK TO BOOKS RECEIVED

This is really getting to be a drag, but I persist. My fear is that the books will reproduce if I leave them alone too long.

The Elmfield Press has sent me a copy of a strange-titled anthology: THE EDWARD DE BONO SCIENCE FICTION COLLECTION. Costs £4.95. Published in England. The book is edited by George Hay who followed the ideas of Edward De Bono when choosing the stories.

De Bono thinks sf is different from "literary" fiction which is mere description of what is and insights into people. SF, sayeth De Bono, uses people and science or fantasy science (ideas) to provoke the reader, to goose reality, to postulate different ways of adding up the score.

Thus the vaunted literary values Characterization-and-the-endless-innerself have no great place or status in sf; they are but tools for the greater benefit of looking at systems from the odd angle. De Bobo restates the old idea that sf is a literature of ideas, and that literary values must/should be subservient to that end.

I'll buy that. But with the understanding that story dynamics are co-equal, if not primary.

The stories George Hay assembled are:

"The Snowball Effect" by Katherine MacLean.

"Noise Level" by Raymond F. Jones.

"Hyperpelosity" by L. Sprague de Camp.

"The Test" by Ralph Williams.

"Firewater" by William Tenn.

"The Warrior Race" by L. Sprague de Camp.

"The Monster" by A. E. Van Vogt.

"Babel II" by Christopher Anvil.

"The Gentle Earth" by Christopher Anvil.

"The Glass Eye" by Eric Frank Russell.

"The Mathenauts" by Norman Kagan.

"Hideaway" by F.L. Wallace.

1-26-77 There is in me a strange feeling of foreboding. I have received today three review copies of the latest Laser books (#55, 56, 57) and this form letter:

LASER READER SERVICE
649 Ontario Street, Stratford,
Ontario N5A 6W2 CANADA

'Dear Laser Reader:

Unfortunately the publisher has decided to discontinue the publication of Laser Books and therefore no further shipments can be made to you. I know that this news will disappoint many followers of this exciting S.F. adventure series but the uncertainties of modern publishing has made this necessary.

I sincerely hope that you enjoyed reading your Laser books.'

'Ted Scharien,
Manager.'

So it is official. Laser ends with #57. The three just received are:

#55 SHEPHERD by Joan Hunter Holly.

#56 GIFT OF THE MANTI by J.F. Bone and Roy Meyers.

#57 SHADOW ON THE STARS by Robert B. Marcus, Jr.

THIS PIVLER/MYLL MEYER/EE/PRINTED

---Jim Hershberg

FANTASTIC. February, 1977. Vol.26, No.1. \$1. Ted White, editor.

Cover by John Bierley.

Novellets: "The Figurine" by L. Sprague de Camp.

"Judas Story" by Brian M. Stapleford.

"Miasmas--A Life Term" by William Nabors.

Short Stories: "Red River Lies Drowning" by C. L. Grant.

"The Stuff of Legends" by Susan Doim.

"Re-Entry" by Barry N. Malzberg.

"In Brightest Day, In Brightest Night" by Steven Utley.

Sword & Sorcery novelet: "Buried Silver" by Dennis More.

Editorial: Ted White.

Interview: LIN CARTER; conducted by Darrell Schweitzer.

Book Reviews: by Fritz Leiber.

COMMENT: The editorial, the interview, the book reviews...were more interesting than the fiction which is competent but--dull or flawed by overwriting, underwriting, slow pace (some authors hoard their precious little ideas and small fund of emotion and action like misers, dribbling them out, making it last...), and general second class narrative talent. The illustrations by Fabian, Olsen and Gleeson promise more than the stories deliver.

COMMENT ON THE NEWS

The Gary Gilmore farce finally ended in the firing squad, leaving me with some puzzlements.

Why, for instance, do state legislatures insist on such barbaric means of execution? We have hanging, the electric chair, firing squad... In France they like to chop a man's head off.

Why not something less expensive, more civilized and "humane"? Why not a swift-acting, painless poison? Why not simply a massive overdose of sleeping pills and a couple good stiff drinks?

The spectacle of the State of Utah twice sending Gilmore to the emergency hospital in order to save him from suicide so that they could shoot him must have struck the world as ludicrous. Gilmore made Utah and this country--and the Liberals---look like the utter fools that they are.

It almost appears that the Liberals need the prospect of a host of 'cruel and inhuman' executions in order to oppose capital punishment. And the Conservatives seem to feel that if a relatively quiet, dignified, painless death is imposed the 'criminal class' won't be deterred enough.

If Gilmore had wanted to fry the Establishment even more he could

have expressed a wish to die by napalm.

The current winter freezings and attendant natural gas shortages in the east will persuade multitudes of companies and corporations to switch to coal and oil this year. This will increase this country's imports of oil and firm up the OPEC prices and make more probable a further rise in oil prices, which will further increase the general rise in costs/prices (not counting the increases due to government inflation of the money supply by debt) and will further erode the standard of living--and force a good deal of conservation and changes in styles of living, in culture....

Watch the howls and squirmings.

The Carter line that an increased deficit now---\$31 billions in two years as now scheduled---will get the country moving again so it will produce enough tax revenues in a few years to balance the budget---is such a crock of manure I'm surprised he and his underlings can utter the argument with a straight face.

'...THE ART OF GOVERNMENT CONSISTS IN TAKING AS MUCH MONEY AS POSSIBLE FROM ONE CLASS OF CITIZENS TO GIVE TO THE OTHER.

---VOLTAIRE

A series of very interesting stories in the Jan.8, 1977 SCIENCE NEWS.

* It seems that the minimum protein requirements needed to maintain health may have been set too low.

*The U.S. Dept. of Agriculture is trying to get people to eat more eggs (high in protein), while other govt. agencies are urging people to cut down on eggs (high cholesterol).

* 'It is now estimated that as much as 50% of all cancers in women and one-third of all cancers in men may be related to what they eat. High fat consumption, particularly, has been linked to cancer of the bowel, although the evidence is still circumstantial. Diet and other environmental factors may interact to cause cancer: Heavy alcohol consumption, for instance, may enhance the carcinogenic impact of other agents, such as cigarette smoke.'

What might be considered man's natural diet? What types of foods are we designed to best use? Meats, I think. Nuts. Fruits. These are easily, simply acquired in nature. The nomadic or simple village existence in the lonnng run, may be our most optimum, natural life, and the life mankind will pursue for millions of years after the current two-or-

three thousand year orgy of planet rape is over.

My personal opinion is that sugars and starches are the real, underlying causes of most of our dietary/nutritional/disease ills. The technique of making fermented drinks is too simple to lose. Mankind will always get drunk...and smoke pot.

Japan now has a nuclear breeder reactor, located 72 miles northeast of Tokyo. The Japanese are now capable of fueling a large nuclear power industry and of building nuclear bombs. Aah so. Welcome to the club, honored people. I await your first, dramatic, catastrophic nuclear accident. Since the Japanese put production over environmental and safety factors.

Recent finding on the process of aging:

* Older people may be as active as younger people, but they expend less energy in the process.

* Older people tend to replace muscle with fat.

* Lung function declines with age but levels off after age 70.

* High levels of cholesterol, risk factors for hart attacks, seem to peak at about age 55; after 55, the risk diminishes with lower levels of blood fat.

* Overweight and diabetes cause a loss of hormone efficiency, which results in body cells not getting do-this, do-that messages, which means a faster pace of aging.

I climbed on the scales this morning. The springs creaked. The dial shouted up at me: "ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-ONE POUNDS, GEIS!"

I have a smart-aleck set of scales. Naturally I have sworn a mighty oath to cut down. My potbelly is becoming embarrassing. Why, looking down, when naked, I cannot even see if I have an erection.

A NEW YORK TIMES story today will cause some Birchites to see further confirmation of the Rockefeller power conspiracy to control the U.S. government, and eventually the world!

Namely, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Jimmy Carter's choice to run the National Security Council, is reorganizing it to suit himself and Carter.

And this bit from the story is revealing: Brzezinski...'is a longtime colleague of Harold Brown, the defense secretary-designate, having worked closely with him on the Tri-lateral Commission, a group that works to improve cooperation among the United States, Western Europe and Japan. And he and Vance worked together for years as cochairmen of the Council on Foreign Relations in New York and developed a special camaraderie during the Carter campaign.'

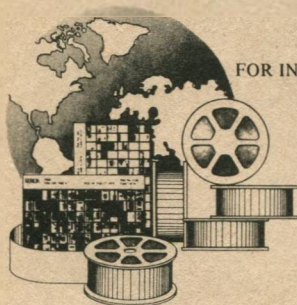
As I reported last issue, Carter was also a member of Rockefeller's Trilateral Commission. Now it is revealed that Brzezinski and Brown were in on the campaign...and are heavyweights in Rockefeller's CFR. All that public relations puffery about the hard choices Carter was making in deciding on his Cabinet was a bunch of crap. The top positions were set, the men picked (and NOT by Carter) months ago.

One key CFR-man's position in the new government may be in trouble: Theodore Sorenson sticks in the craw of a lot of senators as head of the CIA. But to the rescue are coming other long-time Rockefeller-CFR men, Clark Clifford and W. Averell Harriman to testify in the hearings in Sorenson's behalf. Most senators should get the message.

Added circumstantial evidence: Califano, the new Secretary of HEW is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. Surprise.

The lovely illo to the right is from a much earlier issue of SFR (first series--not available) and I thought it apt and worthy of the letters which follow.

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TODD KLEIN--48,49
CARL BENNETT--66,67



1-27-77 There will be this last exchange of letters between Barry Malzberg and Darrell Schweitzer, and then they will co-exist in SFR... separated by pages and pages of Geis.

Let us get it over with, with the LETTER FROM BARRY MALZBERG

20 January 1977

'Dear Mr. Schweitzer:

'I have the new SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW ((#20)) with your comments. You will note that once again I address you directly with a carbon to Richard Geis rather than using the tactic you have of transmitting your responses indirectly. It is a cowardly tactic, yours, and ties in with what appears to be the nature of your personality although unlike you I do not claim to have great insight into people I have never met.

'I will ask Richard Geis to publish this letter and presumably what responses you want to make and this will be the end of it; I do not intend to give you or Geis's readers the satisfaction of demonstrating aspects of my pain, at least not for reruns. Twice will be enough.

'Your response is in factual error. Asked from the floor at the

19

1973 Lunacon panel whether I thought I was a hack I responded (I remember this very well; I was on a panel with Harlan Ellison at the time and any panel with Ellison is memorable) "No." It seems you do not understand the ironic approach I was taking and this is partly my fault; I try to credit people with the ability to see sarcasm or self-mockery and I am often wrong.

'Look: I am sorry that you have failed in science fiction. I am sorry that close to ten years of the most devoted involvement in fan activity and attempts to write professionally have given you no more cachet than running after writers at conventions for ingratiating interviews which you publish in the the amateur press and assemble for semi-professional publication. If I could make it otherwise for you I would because if you had had a career more in line with your ambitions you would not fester with rage and discontent which you would turn upon me causing me rage and discontent.

'You appear to envy my career; you certainly feel that I've gotten away with something. I've gotten away with nothing Schweitzer and you don't even have the emotional (let

alone intellectual) language to grasp this.

'I will not respond to you again. Do me a favor and forget about me and trot after your writers.'

LETTER FROM DARRELL SCHWEITZER

Jan 23, 1977

'Dear Dick,

I trust by now you've gotten another bizarre epistle from Vargo Statten--er, I mean Barry Malzberg concerning my remarks in the new SFR. (Which I haven't as yet seen, by the way. How's that for quick response?)

'I am in full agreement with Barry that this should stop after this exchange. It could go on forever, and I ain't the feudin' kind. Arguments like this are such a waste of energy, which is why I so seldom indulge in them.

'But beyond that, I am fascinated by the way the Esteemed Hack says he does not claim to have insight into people he has never met, then goes on for the rest of the page to tell me about myself, revealing truths I had never before suspected.

'What a revelation indeed to learn that I envy Malzberg's career! I imagine I must also envy Guy Fawkes for his success in becoming the national hero of England. Really, the idea is ludicrous. I do envy certain writers, but there's no conceivable thing Malzberg has done which I would want my name attached to. I no more envy him than I desire his coming obscurity as he goes the way of Lionel Fanthorpe and Ed Earl Repp and is relegated to the status of something for old time fans to chuckle over, while everyone else looks blank. Some of the writers I envy might include Isaac Asimov and Sprague de Camp for their long and successful careers which they continue to enjoy, John Varley and Joe Haldeman for becoming overnight sensations, and Karl Edward Wagner for jumping from the semi-prozines (mostly MIDNIGHT SUN) into the paperbacks and carving out a market for himself despite category restrictions.

'(Fred of HOURGLASS BOOKS, my friendly barometer of these things, tells me that Karl's latest, DARK CRUSADE, is selling "incredibly.")

'Why should I envy or admire Malzberg who is a burned-out wreck after ten years of writing some of the worst bilge the field has ever known? Should I want a career which leaves me the most actively detests SF writer of all time? Actually, if Malzberg's credibility weren't so shot to hell, and I could believe he was being facetious when he seem-

ed to be, and sincere when he claimed, I would take him for a failed artist rather than a low-grade exploiter of the SF label and I would pity him.

'Malzberg's synopsis of my own "career" is better fiction than many of his "stories." Have I really failed after ten years? Yuggoth, ten years ago I was fourteen. I wrote my first story out longhand and had my mother type it. I sent it to Fred Pohl at IF and he returned it with a rejection slip in three days. (Probably just sniffing the envelope to know it stank. Also I imagine editors are wary of 4 page stories submitted in letter envelopes.) I think the reason there are so few literary prodigies is that adolescents don't know enough about themselves or the world to depict human beings believably. Yes practice & control of language is one thing, but more than that I suspect it's simply maturity. If as an adult I had struggled for ten years without accomplishing anything, then Malzberg might have a point. But of course I "sold" a story to an anthology which folded before publication when I was 19 and the story was later bought and published by WHISPERS. So far my score with anthologies is nine sales to books which folded before publication, and two to books which most likely will appear (ANDROMEDA #3 and SWORDS AGAINST DARKNESS #3). I've also sold as of last reckoning three stories to VOID and one to FANTASTIC, and quite a few to every small fantasy magazine you can name. My ambition as a 14-year-old scribbler of abominations was to sell to a newsstand prozine. I've done it, and I wasn't even thinking of foreign sales or anthologies then.

'(For several years after my first submissions c. 1967, I didn't send anything to prozines because I knew my stuff wasn't good enough. I knew this because it was often rejected from fanzines which published fiction. My first step into what we now call the semi-professional market was a sale to WEIRDBOOK in 1969, after much struggle and revision. Nowadays I usually go elsewhere because WB can't pay competing rates.) (Even with the best-of-issue cash prize, which I recently won by the way.)

'So I don't feel particularly frustrated and I don't consider myself a failure. I have more ambitions now. I'm trying to sell a novel. And I would like to sell more regularly to the newsstand magazines. And I would like to publish a collection of short stories from a small press. (This may actually come a-

bout --Myrddin Press is the publisher and the title is ILL MET BY MOON-LIGHT. The book will consist of the best stories I have available for reprinting at the time the publisher has enough money to print the thing). These things will probably happen eventually.

'As for the interviews, they're a lucky discovery I made a few years back. I found I could do them, that they were interesting and relatively easy to do, and that editors wanted them. So I've done them. But they of course are journalism, not art. I have never pretended they were anything more, although I must admit I like to be able to say I did the first book of SF interviews ever. [Actually I understand Paul Walker had one going with a major paperback publisher, but the deal fell through. Which is a shame, because his might have been better than mine. And I wouldn't really mind being #2 next to him.] This is hardly the only thing I do, and Malzberg is the first person to suspect it's the sort of syncophantic groupie thing he seems to imagine it is. But then that's just his odd way of looking at the world.

'Here's a curious note to end this on: I find from my experience as a small time bookseller that it's easier to sell a copy of VOID with a story by me in it than a Malzberg book. Malzberg books are totally worthless as commodities these days. I've never encountered such sales resistance on anything since the "Richard Avery" EXPENDIBLES things. Barry has completely lost his audience. People feel ripped off by his stuff and don't come back for more. Just like they do with Roger Elwood anthologies. Someone at Philcon this year mentioned a bookseller he knows who, whenever he gets a box of Malzberg books in from a publisher, simply puts them under a counter for a few weeks, then sends them back for a refund, since they're not worth the trouble of putting on the shelves.

'And Barry Malzberg thinks I envy him? Ha!'

'A MAN SHOULD NEVER BE ASHAMED TO OWN HE HAS BEEN IN THE WRONG, WHICH IS BUT SAYING, IN OTHER WORDS, THAT HE IS WISER TODAY THAN HE WAS YESTERDAY.'

---ALEXANDER POPE

'THE LION AND THE CALF SHALL LIE DOWN TOGETHER, BUT THE CALF WON'T GET MUCH SLEEP.'

---Woody Allen,
WITHOUT FEATHERS

Thanks to John Granacki

THE DREAM QUARTER

#3

Lester del Rey's book review column in the 3/77 ANALOG is a disgrace to the human spirit or at least to that fragment of the human spirit which can be said to still exist in our pain-wracked field. That it should appear in the leading magazine of this genre in 1977 is heart-breaking for its very appearance says by implication that the efforts of some writers -- among whom I of course number myself -- to influence the category over the last ten years were not only failures but laughable. This review in our leading magazine says then that my work deserves only contempt and whatever its limitations it is more. It is more than that. It is not contemptible.

I want to address this review. One of the few benefits -- the only benefit? -- of an abandoned career is the ability to face the field past caution or special pleading. My manuscripts will not face examination at del Rey Books. My published work will fall out of the purview of ANALOG'S reviews.

I have been against del Rey's appointment to the review post held honorably by the late P. Schuyler Miller from the moment I heard of it about two years ago. My feelings were communicated both to the editor of ANALOG and to del Rey. Putting aside this man's orientation which is to misunderstand or revile any approach to science fiction not in existence in, at the latest, 1955, there were practical reasons for suspicion:

1) In his last column in the last issue of WORLDS OF IF (December, 1974), del Rey had spoken of his own weariness, his feeling that he was talked out, reviewed out, that he needed a long period in which to rest. Of course this statement was predicated on the knowledge that IF was gone and he had lost his position...still, by his own statement he was no longer qualified to review

2) He is the husband of the editor-in-chief of Ballantine Books, science fiction. His influence upon Ballantine's science fiction list is then undeniable -- any claims that he has no dealings with Judy



Lynn del Rey other than of a non-professional nature would have to be laughed out of court -- and calls in to question his ability to render disinterested reviews in a field where Ballantine is a dominant influence. Like it or not, books presented to him can be regarded by him only as: a) competition or b) to his own interest.

These objections were rendered two years ago, before del Rey's reviews had established -- as they have subsequently established -- their validity and long before Ballantine science fiction's announced conversion, in March of 1977, to the imprint "Del Rey Books"...an imprint which according to Ballantine's own publicity will partake of the editorial advice and the reputation of both del Reys.

Under these circumstances a more sensitive man might have quit the post or a less tolerant editor than Ben Bova might have asked him to go and it is not impossible that by the time this sees print one event or the other may have occurred. Whether del Rey is gone by May of 1977 (I rather doubt it) would not moot the point of this essay, however, because the new column is an assault whose effects will linger for a long time.

Del Rey's opening remarks, about 1,000 words under the title *praejudicio* (Latin, he states, for prejudice) can only be compared to the attitude of a demented man upon the death of an old enemy: it is not enough for him to come to the funeral, sit in the front row and assist at the service, his soul is not truly at rest until he has spat not once but several times upon the grave. In early 1977 when most of the ambitious writers who came through this field in the past decade are either self-exiled (Silverberg, Gene Wolfe)

or gone on to other matters (Harlan Ellison, Ursula K. LeGuin) or simply unable to find publishers for their work (I could name many names here but will not) del Rey still feels threatened enough to act as if they were ringing the very borders of ANALOG or del Rey Books and were likely, at any moment, to come ravening through the door, emitting ninko, faggot, New Wave, cries.

For example:

"I want characters that belong in the story. Don't give me an anti-hero as the pilot of the first star ship. He wouldn't be picked for the job. In fact anti-heroes are usually ridiculous in science fiction simply because the challenges of the future situations would either eliminate them before the story or kill them off during it. For that matter I'm not interested in self-pitying slobes in any story as main characters."

For example:

"I know there's an increasing tendency for science fiction to be made complicated and difficult to understand and I deplore that...it's the writer's job to think all that out and make it lucid...experimental style? Well, almost none of it is honestly experimental. All those tricks were tried to my knowledge back in the early 1930s and before. They didn't work well enough to be generally adopted so they should be called failures..."

For example:

"All of this, of course, makes me highly prejudiced when reviewing here, toward what might be called the elements of good pulp fiction. Well, why not? I'm writing for the readers of this magazine...I'm reviewing for pulp readers! Thank God!"

There is no copyright on the Almighty, of course; he may be invoked by any of us.

Del Rey's generalizations are so banal, so superficial, that their very reproduction should demolish them (and if they do not self-destruct for some readers it is doubtful that I could do the job) but at the risk of performing like a baited bull which is, of course, precisely del Rey's conscious method, I would make a few counter-generalizations:

1) To a superficial mind rooted somewhere in 1937, any protagonist other than an idealized hero, any attempt at fully rounded portraiture, may appear as an "anti-hero". (Poul Anderson's term for the breed is snivelling faggots; thank you, Poul.) Any character portraiture in science fiction in which the protagonist is

BY BARRY MALZBERG

not completely in control of events would seem to del Rey, to make him* an "anti-hero" whereas what he is is a person. People in science fiction still intimidate del Rey. I am not sure I know why this is so. Maybe he could never create them.

It is quite likely that a sniveling faggot would not be picked as captain of the first starship or even the second, at least deliberately by what will be the NASAs of the collective state in our future. What del Rey cannot conceive is that the fact of space travel, the stresses of his situation carried to unfamiliar territory might break him down, to his utter distress and mystification. (If BEYOND APOLLO, for instance, is about anything it is about that and so is DYING INSIDE.)

Del Rey may not like "self-pitying slobs" which to him are people depicted as breaking down under stress. He may not like Blacks, either (and if so he is on better ground because there are almost none in science fiction and never have been; perhaps too much acquaintance with real pain) but there are a hell of a lot of both around and even at 62** he cannot isolate himself from all of them.

2) Science fiction can become complicated and difficult if it deals with complicated and difficult material which I take the possible effects of future technology or social arrangement upon human beings to be. Writers are not, at least most of them, perverse children who are deliberately inaccessible; they do, some of them, if they are reasonably ambitious and open-minded, try to convey a decent sense of mystification. Why this point has to be argued in 1977 -- after NASA, after Vietnam, after Buchenwald, after Watergate, after this, after that -- is beyond me but it is not beyond del Rey.

3) I do not know what "experiments" of the 1930s del Rey is talking about. Who in THRILLING WONDER or ASTOUNDING STORIES was writing like J.G. Ballard or Thomas M. Disch? Where was the CAMP CONCENTRATION or BOOK OF SKULLS of 1937? What is he talking about?

Modern stylistic advances in this field -- which del Rey seems to fear -- come from literary and extra-lit-

*or her. Or her. Yes. Sorry, ladies.

**This is not an agist slur...R.A. Lafferty, for instance, is a year older than del Rey chronologically and in every other way is younger than I...I'm 38, by the way.

erary influences which did not exist when del Rey was writing HELEN O'LOV. Why does this point, too, have to be made in 1977?

4) If ANALOG were a pulp magazine it would be printed on pulp stock, would be one of a number of similar magazines published by Conde Nast, would cost twenty-five cents and would have grotesque figures on the cover instead of a rather sedate technologically accurate space scene. ANALOG is a science fiction magazine of which there are now but six or seven left, three of which are staggering and two of which are brand new. The era of pulp magazines ended officially by 1953 when, for economic and distribution reasons, these magazines faded away by scores.

In the body of his review del Rey reviews books by Spider Robinson, George C. Smith, Cyril Kornbluth, Ward Moore, Marion Zimmer Bradley and Arkadi and Boris Strugatski. The content of these reviews are of no interest to me nor of any legitimacy. (Except to say that not content with his opening remarks del Rey invokes the spirit of that great writer and dead writer, Cyril M. Kornbluth, to further attack his "experimentalists", a position from which Kornbluth has no defense except my certainty that had he been given years and strength he would stand close to first and best among that group of writers who terrify del Rey.) Three of them, however, should not have been published.

In contravention of his own stated policy never to review material which has run previously in ANALOG, del Rey reviews (mildly unfavorably as it turns out) Spider Robinson's TELEMPATH, the first third of which appeared in the magazine only a few months ago. And in contravention of all decency and tact he reviews -- in the most glowing possible get-it-this-moment terms -- two Ballantine books, the Kornbluth and the Smith.

As it turns out THE BEST OF CYRIL M. KORNBLUTH is a moving and remarkable testament and I am glad to see it, and publication of THE COMPLETE VENUS EQUILATERAL is at least twenty years overdue and glad to see that also...but del Rey's promotion material disguised as a review is an insult to every reader of ANALOG, it is an insult to me...and it is, if he cares, an insult to Ben Bova.

I don't think del Rey should have been given this job. I think that he should get out. The conflict of interest is the reason I feel this way: I despise his attitudes but am prepared to deal with them as I have dealt with them here. But

the circumstances of the field---only a few regular review outlets, very few reviewers, the enormous relative influence exerted by the ANALOG reviewer---at this time make it impossible to accept the situation without protest.

I want to make my position clear:* I have done two guest columns for ANALOG (one during Miller's time, one during del Rey's) and might be considered to be one of a number of people in line for this influential position when and if del Rey finally goes. In saying the following I hope that I am demonstrating a sense of scruple which could only incite the contempt of a del Rey: I do not wish to be considered for the ANALOG position at any time in the future. Not because I would not want it, not because I do not honor the magazine. But because it would compromise the statement of this article which is simply directed to a constituency of one: Ben, this man has got to go. Please.

7 February 1977

ADDENDUM: 2-17-77

In his April column del Rey reviews two new magazines, ISAAC ASIMOV'S SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE and the new quarterly from Boston devoted to previously unpublished writers, UNEARTH. (Reviewed, the latter that is, by the editor in these pages last issue.) Magazine reviews are probably a good idea; I thought at one time of a regular column of comment in AMAZING and Ted White even gave me the go-ahead, but I backed out because the question of conflict of interest in this terribly incestuous field seemed insoluble.

Del Rey's superficial, positive reviews of the contents of ISAAC ASIMOV'S MAGAZINE, a competent, professional package exploiting one of the most honored names in our genre and published by the solvent and well-established Davis Publications, Inc., are unexceptional; his review of UNEARTH in which he uses the platform of a 115,000 circulation magazine to revile some helpless outsiders with no money and no cachet strike me as abusive and cowardly. No further comments except to quote his summary on UNEARTH: "The whole idea of a magazine by previously unpublished writers is wrong. The other magazines pay far better and

*Yes, I know, I know...

offer more prestige...what is left since all magazines of science fiction welcome new writers won't have much to offer."

Science fiction magazine editors, it is true, remain more hospitable to new writers than, say, the good folks over at THE HUDSON REVIEW, or Pantheon but there are, right now, only six of them in the country and since they can accommodate, at the very best in total, perhaps two stories per month from unknown writers, that means that there are an awful lot of people, not all of them incompetent, who are unable to find professional outlet for their work. Under those circumstances (when I was editing AMAZING and FANTASTIC ten years ago I was seeing, for instance, three hundred manuscripts a week, ten to fifteen of which I considered at least marginally publishable and that was in a wider market in a better time) any effort, no matter how ill-financed, to make some kind of a way for new writers should be treated gently or, at the very worst, ignored. del Rey, an intellectual bully and an intellectual coward, does neither.

REG NOTE

Both Lester del Rey and Ben Bova, the editor of ANALOG, were sent copies of Barry Malzberg's column and his addendum.

Lester del Rey has not responded in any way.

Ben Bova's responses are as follows:

LETTERS FROM BEN BOVA

16 February 1977

'Thanks for letting me see Barry Malzberg's upcoming column on Lester Del Rey's reviews for ANALOG.

'To paraphrase a well-worn piece of wisdom, I may not agree with what Barry (or Lester, for that matter) says, but I will defend to my death his right to say it.'

March 1, 1977

'Thanks for letting me see Barry's addendum. I don't see any point in adding my two-cents-worth to this: both Barry and Lester are quite capable of taking care of themselves.'

REG COMMENT

I don't enjoy hearing Lester del Rey called names. I admire him, respect him, and feel his integrity is pretty well beyond question.

But... I was interested in the fact that he is an editor at Ballantine and at the same time the book reviewer for ANALOG. That situation sets up an automatic potential conflict of interest, and I decided to test it against his performance.

From March, 1975 to March, 1977, Lester del Rey (by my count) reviewed 120 books.

Of those 120 reviews, 16 were of Ballantine books, and two were of Random House books. Random House owns Ballantine.

So, he reviewed 18 of "his" books and 102 of the competition's books.

How many of each set did he give unfavorable reviews?

One Ballantine book was panned.

Twenty of his competition's books were panned.

He reviewed approximately one of his employers' books for every five of the competition. Does Ballantine (and Random House) publish one-sixth of the hardcover and softcover sf?

This shows to me at least an unconscious bias toward Ballantine and Random House. (Random House publishes very little sf, and my impression is that they published only two sf books in those two years. Lester del Rey gave both Random House books a very favorable review.)

And my vivid impression is that he gave the Ballantine books a very high percentage of 'Recommended' and 'Highly Recommended' flags as compared to his competition.

It's natural for Lester del Rey to tend to review favorably the Ballantine books he chooses to review; he probably helped decide to publish them in the first place!

There does appear to be a conflict of interest operative in his reviews in "The Reference Library" in ANALOG.

Should he give up the column? Yes, I think so. Every column, from now on, will be suspect in several thousand minds. It's a very difficult ethical situation for him. The situation is even more difficult now with the publication of Barry's column and this Comment. There is no way Mr. del Rey can leave with any kind of grace, at least not very soon.

Ben Bova has a problem, too. He may feel he made a mistake in choosing Lester del Rey to write "The Reference Library" after P. Schuyler Miller's death. But he cannot make a change "under the gun" any time soon.

Q: WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE GREATEST WEAKNESS OF SCIENCE FICTION TODAY?

WILSON TUCKER: FAILURE OF WRITERS TO STRIKE OFF THE BEATEN PATH, FAILURE OF EDITORS TO BUY THOSE SUBMISSIONS THAT ARE OFF THE BEATEN PATH. LITERARY INCEST IS KILLING US.

(ALL RIGHT, DO YOU WANT A TYPICAL GRIPE?: I AM UNABLE TO SELL AN OFF-BEAT NOVELETTE DEALING WITH A WOMAN WHOSE JOB IT IS TO REVIVE MALE CORPSES AND PUT THEM TO WORK IN FACTORIES---LET THE STIFFS WORK WHILE THE MASTERS ENJOY THEMSELVES. OF COURSE, SOONER OR LATER SHE REVIVES ONE STIFF WHO WON'T COOPERATE AND HE MAKES THE NOVELETTE. IT WON'T SELL BECAUSE "I DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS.")

---THE DOUBLE: BILL
SYMPOSIUM, 1969

MONOLOG CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

1-28-77 An interesting day. Dan DePrez dropped over and delivered the John Varley interview which I had suggested he undertake...which sets up all kinds of conflicts in my editorial breast. Will I be able to get it into this issue? Will I have to delay it until the August issue? Look at the contents page and find out. I've given up all hope of planning issues.

I got a laugh out of the letter Charles Platt enclosed with the copy of his latest book he sent along. The book is SWEET EVIL (Berkley 03298-1, \$1.25), and he says:

'The enclosed is pornography, not science fiction, so you probably won't have received a review copy from Berkley. I think you may like it, so I'm sending you a copy of my own. The novel was written five years ago and sold, then, to Olympia Press; they went bankrupt before it was published so I got the rights back and sold it to Lancer; they went under, so I sold it for the third time to Berkley. How Berkley can publish anything as depraved as this beats me, but there it is, out on the newsstand racks, without even a warning against selling it to minors. Personally, I disapprove and think this book should be banned.'

Ho, ho, ho. It is hardcore porn, which is interesting. And I must say very well-written, effective porn, which is a compliment, and perhaps your natural genre; the dialogue and characterization are really good. It's a tough book. It is, truth to tell, better written than the two sf novels of yours I've read.

SF/FANTASY BOOKS RECEIVED

THE KING OF ELFLAND'S DAUGHTER

by Lord Dunsany

Ballantine 25523, \$1.95

'The people of the Vale of Erl wanted magic in their land. And so it was that their king sent his son ---young Alveric---into the strangely enchanted meadows of Faerie to find and wed the King of Elfland's daughter.

'So armed with a wondrous sword forged from thunderbolts by the witch Ziroonderel, Alveric went off to do his father's bidding. And he returned to the Vale with the beautiful Lirazel as his beloved wife.

'Their love was passionate and strong, but it was no match for the magic of the King of Elfland...a magic powerful enough to whisk Lirazel away from her husband and son.

'Bereft, Alveric set out on the most impossible mission any mortal ever dared.'

COMMENT: I'd suggest reading Darrell Schweitzer's observations on Dunsany in SFR 20 and his article this issue on the archaic style in fantasy before reading this Dunsany novel. Your enjoyment would be enhanced.

UNDER PRESSURE

By Frank Herbert

Ballantine 25597, \$1.50

Formerly titled THE DRAGON IN THE SEA, serialized in ANALOG (or was it still ASTOUNDING in 1956?)

This is a damned good story which, now, has more credibility than ever---about an atomic-powered submarine tug towing a huge submerged oil barge from enemy waters. And one of the crew is a saboteur.

THE BEST OF C.M. KORNBLUTH

Edited by Frederik Pohl

Ballantine 25461, \$1.95

Introduction: An Appreciation by Frederik Pohl

"The Rocket of 1995"

"The Words of Guru"

"The Only Thing We Learn"

"The Adventurer"

"The Little Black Bag"

"The Luckiest Man in Denv"

"The Silly Season"

"The Remorseful"

"Gomez"

"The Advent on Channel 12"

"The Marching Morons"

"The Last Man Left in the Bar"

"The Mindworm"

"With These Hands"

"Shark Ship"

"Friend to Man"

"The Altar at Midnight"

"Dominoes"

"Two Dooms"

About the author.

COMMENT: There is a short biographical sketch at the end in which Kornbluth mentions he has a constant

ringing in the ears. A footnote by Fred Pohl mentions that 'The "constant ringing in the ears" turned out to be essential malignant hypertension, and a few years later caused his death.'

Glug I have a constant ringing in my ears, which my doctor calls a neuritis of the ear.... And I've had it for three years.

LETTERS TO STAR TREK

Edited by Susan Sackett

Ballantine 25522, \$1.95.

With a special introduction by Gene Roddenberry.

COMMENT: Another aspect of the ST phenomenon; letters from fans and some photos of ST cast, etc. Positively incestuous. The STAR TREK enthusiasm must be regarded by the publishers as a license to steal. Anything about the show sells!

1-29-77 LOCUS #197 arrived today, with the unwelcome news that co-editor Dena Brown is in the hospital for abdominal surgery.

The News in LOCUS: confirmation that Laser Books has suspended publication for "evaluating" and that Roger Elwood is no longer with the firm. Hmm. Roger's track record is something of a disaster.

The Laser books did not reach the wider audience intended, and were bought, mostly, by the regular sf readership. There are, reports LOCUS, 28 novels in inventory, and these may or may not be published by Laser.

JOHN RACKHAM has died. Rackham was the pen name of John Thomas Phillifent. Phillifent died, age 60, after a long illness. He wrote, under his own name, KING OF ARGENT (DAW UQ1046, 95¢). It was a very popular book, having been reprinted quite often.

I note that LOCUS has upped subscription rates to \$6.00 for 12, \$12.00 for 24. LOCUS is published 15 times per year. 34 Ridgewood lane, Oakland, CA 94611.

I have recieved three complimentary copies of the new (Jan-Feb, 1977) LIBERTARIAN REVIEW in which is my review of F. Paul Wilson's HEALER. LR is a fine, provocative review and I recommend it. It is thoroughly professional. Cost: \$1.50, or 6 issues \$8.00. 6737 Annapolis Rd., POB 2599, Landover Hills, MD 20784. It is edited by a frequent SFR contributor, Karl T. Pflock.

I am beginning to get subscription renewals from California, which means the mailing of SFR 20 on January 20th must have gone at "hot mail" speed---first class. At least those sacks heading south.

Those \$50. tax rebates scheduled to be mailed to everyone around April begin to look like small potatoes and too likely to go into paying monstrous utility and fuel bills racked up by this very severe winter. The wages and production losses caused by ice, snow and cold, and above all by natural gas shortages seem to be equal to the whole tax cut package for 1977.

Not to worry; Congress will probably realize this and up the rebates and tax cuts to compensate. By Gad, Sir, they will get this economy going again or ignore the reason why. Already interest rates are going up in anticipation of the extra inflation all that debt represents. All this crop damage will send the cost-of-living indices soaring, and bring screams of anguish from the consumers. Start planning to enlarge your vegetable garden, folks.

1-31-77 The devastating effect on this country's economy by a series of storms this winter is no doubt chastening to a lot of people.

A long-term series of high pressure zones over the northwest has caused the jet stream to carry our normal storms in a great jumping loop into Canada where they pick up frigid air and then sink into the midwest and east to bedevil those areas with arctic weather.

These highs will/have caused a drought here in Oregon and a drastic reduction in the snowpack---the water reserve---and so in late 77 and early 78 we'll have water and electricity shortages.

And nobody knows why these highs persist. We curse the rain, but are dependant on it. And because we don't get our normal rains, the middle and eastern sections of the country get igloo climate and gas shortages.

This should cut us down to size. Mother nature is telling us about hubris. One small change in atmospheric pressures---caused by ghod-knows-what---and a civilization can die.

Sic transit gloria gas.

Of course our civilization won't die...but sure as hell others have, in the past. And this winter lesson is one that is being taken to heart, I suspect, by many, many people, especially corporate managers. The

so-called sun belt states can look for a lot of relocating industries in the coming years...and the southern rim can expect to grow in political and economic power. The northeast is dying, and this winter will only hasten the process. Go south, young man.

My comments on Charles Platt's SWEET EVIL of a few days ago were made on the basis of a few opening chapters. I've read deeper into the novel, and now see why he says his own book should be banned; it's into sado-maso, murder, bondage.... It's a turn-off. Repellent. But well-done.

CARD FROM ROBERT BLOCH

Jan 27, 1977

'Thanks for a superior issue! And for, as usual, a superior insight. I refer to your comments on all-review. In a generally-genre-oriented such as yours, personalized (and even personally prejudiced) comments and lengthy disquisitions can be read for entertainment or ignored in favor of other content. But the all-review zine serves only a single purpose, and that purpose isn't fulfilled by pointless verbosity or the utilization of a purported criticism as an actual springboard for the reviewer's dive into some pet theory or display of pseudo-erudition which has little or no relationship with what he's ostensibly reviewing. And speaking of pointless verbosity, this last sentence is a sure Hugo-nominee for that category! Anyhow, I admire your example, and hope it will be followed.'

Thanks. I only extended my belief that the writer should think of the reader's needs/wants to that of the publisher/editor: Who am I serving? How can I best fill their needs? Too often the questions are (on an unconscious level) How can I publish a classy zine and impress a lot of people?

The books have begun to pile up again, so I'd better get with it in the acknowledgements, if no time is available for reading.

BOOKS RECEIVED

UNIVERSE 7

Edited by Terry Carr
Doubleday, \$5.95, 1977.

"A Rite of Spring" by Fritz Leiber.

"My Lady of the Psychiatric Sorrows" by Brian W. Aldiss.

"Probability Storm" by Julian Reid.

"People Reviews" by Robert Childson.

"Ibid." by George Alec Effinger.
"The Marvelous Brass Chessplaying Automaton" by Gene Wolfe.

"Brain Fever Season" by R. A. Lafferty.

"The Ninth Symphony of Ludwig van Beethoven and Other Lost Songs" by Carter Scholz.

KEEPERS OF THE GATE

By Steven G. Spruill
Doubleday, \$5.95, 1977.

"AM AT LARGE ON ERIDANI. DESTRUCTION OF EARTH BY PROTEPS IMMINENT. MESSAGE SENT TUNNEL OF SPACE A.S.N. SHIP HOUND. HILLER."

'Jared Hiller hopelessly transmitted the message through the eleven light-years long tunnel of space between Eridani and Earth. Eridani was the Earth's nearest inhabited star, and Hiller had become the unfortunate intermediary between the two races---which were now attempting to annihilate each other.

'The ordeal began when Hiller, a forcibly retired spaceship captain, encountered a former acquaintance whose arm had been severed in a freak accident. Now, twenty-five years later, the man not only had

grown his arm back, but had not aged a day. After intensive investigation and with the assistance of a mysterious female newspaper reporter, Hiller discovered the man was doing surveillance work for the inhabitants of Eridani, the Proteps. This ancient race, whose lives spanned twelve million years, had perfected the ability to rejuvenate limbs and attain immortality.

'What's more. Hiller learned the Proteps were secretly destroying all vestiges of proof that a long-forgotten superior race of man once existed. To find the rest of the answers Hiller had to crash through the guarded gateway to Eridani. But once there, he found the secrets more terrible than he had ever imagined....'

COMMENT: The first chapter is a good dangeraction hook. Wish I had time to read more.

"I'M GOING TO CANADA TO PROTEST THE SLAUGHTER OF THE HELPLESS BABY SEALS AS SOON AS I HAVE MY ABORTION."



2-1-77 Nice day outside, with promise to be nice, sunny, the next few days, again. The high-pressure is back. A few days from now the storm that is on its way up and over into Canada will sink down into the States again...

I jokingly/seriously told a grocery clerk that eggs---now 84¢ a dozen would be \$1.00 a dozen before the year was out. She smiled ruefully.

A couple of volunteer cabbages have survived the winter so far, including a couple periods of below-freezing weeks. Amazing. They haven't grown any (or very, very little) but they haven't died. We may have some very early cabbages to eat this spring.

MAGAZINE RECEIVED

ISAAC ASIMOV'S SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE. Spring, 1977, Vol.1, No.1. \$1.00. Edited by George H. Scithers, overseen by Asimov Himself.

Editorial by Isaac Asimov.

Stories: "Good-bye, Robinson Crusoe" by John Varley.

"The Doctor's Dilemma" by Martin Gardner.

"Think!" by Isaac Asimov.

"Quarantine" by Arthur C. Clarke.

"The Homesick Chicken" by Edward D. Hoch.

"Perchance to Dream" by Sally A. Sellers.

"On Our Museum--A Preview of the New Smithsonian" by George O. Smith.

"Air Raid" by Herb Boehm [John Varley].

"Kindertotenlieder" by Jonathan Fast.

"Period of Totality" by Fred Saberhagen.

"The Scorch on Wetzel's Hill" by Sherwood Springer.

"Coming of Age in Henson's Tube" by William Joa Watkins.

On Books by Charles N. Brown.

"Time Storm" by Gordon R. Dickson.

COMMENT: Bad distribution; not available in supermarkets. Got my copy from Carl Bennett's THE ILLUSTRATED STORE.

Learned from Dan DePrez (when he delivered the Varley interview) that Varley wrote "Air Raid"; is Herb Boehm Varley's first pseudonym?

This first issue should sell well enough if it gets seen by sf fans, out of curiosity and a desire for a volume one, number one.

Interesting change to a book-like single column text layout. If you make a magazine look like a pocketbook (subtly), will it sell better?

Not much editorial personality in the mag, despite the interesting Asimov editorial. Lots of house ads, relatively speaking. Very few illustrations....more book-alike dynamics.

A few good stories: "Perchance to Dream" by Sally Sellers; "Air Raid" by Varley (his lead-off story is okay, but comes close to drowning in characterization and dilly-dally) is a stunner; and "Time Storm" by Dickson is obviously a section of a novel, but a winner even if it does chop off at the end, with the reader howling.

Next issue is promised for March 16.

BOOKS RECEIVED

TWILIGHT OF THE SERPENT

By Peter Valentine Timlett
Bantam 10008-5, \$1.50.

'The Druid Cult was doomed to total annihilation by the invading Romans. But the mystical tribe of warrior-priests called every weapon of man or magic to aid their sacred quest. Bold swords, brutal lusts and demon rites were all unleashed in a war that shook the walls of the universe. And ushered in the bloody dawn of man's awesome destiny...'

COMMENT: Somewhat overwritten blurb, but a swift scan of pages tells me it's written well and there is some tantalizing content; are the Druids the descendants of a segment of Atlantis?

This is another one I'd like to read. Or, rather, this trilogy. This is the third volume of a saga; the other two being THE SEEDBEARERS and THE POWER OF THE SERPENT. Both were published by Bantam. I am pleased to find I have them on my shelves. Someday....

THE PLANTS

By Kenneth McKenney
Bantam 02976-2, \$1.75.

'It is the most stupendous summer England has ever known. Long hot days relieved by refreshing show-

ers transform the country into a garden of paradise. In the little village of Brandling, vegetation is growing in lush profusion. Gardens are thriving. But the people of Brandling are not. They are being stalked, strangled, mutilated by... the plants!'

COMMENT: Preposterous, talky, with an idealistic, mystical we-must-share-the-world message at the end, otherwise the plants will dispense with humanity, thank you.

2-2-77 Just a short comment here on basic inflation.... There will be a lot said in the media in the coming months about inflation being caused by the shortage of this or that, by the severe winter, by gouging middlemen... Inflation is a word badly misused--deliberately, in my view, but that's another topic--by ignorant copy-writers and careless commentators.

The laws of supply and demand (and market control) can set prices up or down within an economy whose money supply is in perfect equilibrium with production and services.

Inflation is pumping unearned money (debt) into the economic bloodstream to "stimulate" the economy. It is like pouring water into a glass. Why is it so astonishing that the water (price) level rises?

The politicians and their prostitute economists naturally do not want this simple cause-and-effect law generally known--or remembered. Inflation becomes, to them, a strange, uncontrollable 'disease', and they struggle mightily to 'fight' it.

So---when the cries of agony reach peaks of idiocy this year---remember that a short supply of something will run up prices if the demand is there, and a price-fixing power can set unnaturally high prices, and an 80-billion dollar deficit in one year (preceded by deficits of 55 and 30 billion) will always raise the general price level as it trickles down and percolates up and courses through the economy. There is still one law that cannot be evaded: THERE AIN'T NO SUCH THING AS A FREE LUNCH.

The name of the game for politicians is power. (They call it Public Service.) The more power the better. Over everything, especially people. You don't get along in the power game if you diminish the supply of power (money, laws). You work instead to structure the tax



PRITHEE SIRRAH, WHAT DOUSTOU MEAN BY ARCHAIC STYLE IN FANTASY?

BY DARRELL SCHWEITZER

When I was at the Clarion Workshop in the summer of 1973 I wrote a fantasy story set in the Middle Ages, and, of course all my characters addressed one another as "thee" and "thou", and odd little words were dropped here and there in the text, to give it the right "flavor". You know what I mean. Those stories are always written that way, aren't they?

The story didn't go over very well with the workshopers. It was even used once to smoke Seth McEvoy out of a locked room, the idea being that he wouldn't be able to remain in the same place with the awful thing for very long. No dice. He slipped it back under the door with the word "GARBAGE!" written across the top. Later Ted Sturgeon wrote something nice on another copy, but he never did seem to be able to call a turkey for what it was. Later, someone else who didn't like the story was a little more specific. This person bemoaned the fact that "archaic" prose is always "wordy and verbose, like the stuff they wrote in the Middle Ages."

At that point I came screeching to an abrupt mental halt and said to myself wait a minute here! Real medieval prose was not at all verbose, if you define verbosity as the tendency to use excess words, fifty where two will do. In a time when paper was extremely scarce, and everything was written painstakingly by hand, nobody could afford to be verbose. Malory's *LE MORTE D'ARTHUR*, for instance, is extremely spare, perhaps too much so as Mark Twain complained several times in *A CONNECTICUT YANKEE*. Yet this guy said that "archaic" prose was unreadably verbose. He cited William Morris as a horrendous example. It occurred to me then that maybe we were talking about two different things. There was a problem of definitions.

Later one of the visiting writers -- Robin Wilson, I think, -- got closer to the heart of the matter when he said it's a mistake to label a style "archaic". What exactly do we mean by this? Middle English?

Quaker English? By today's standards the stereotyped beatnik slang of the 1950s is archaic -- yeah man, like really hep. Absolutely cool, you dig? -- but somehow I suspect this isn't what people have in mind when they mention "archaic" style.

So I took a quick look through the various writers famed for writing Archaic, or, as James Blish once put it, "talking through the nose." This is from the first page of Morris' *THE WATER OF THE WONDROUS ISLES*:

"Whilom, as tells the tale, was a walled cheaping-town hight Utterhay, which was builded in a bight of the land a little off the great highway which went from over the mountains to the sea."

And this is from Lord Dunsay's *THE KING OF ELFLAND'S DAUGHTER*:

"And Alveric took the weight and the written thing.

"Let not the two touch," warned the witch.

And Alveric set them apart.

"Once over the frontier," she said, "he may move Elf-land where he will, but you and the sword will be within his borders."

"Mother Witch," said Alveric. "Will he be wroth with you if I do this?"

(P. 230 of the Putnam edition)

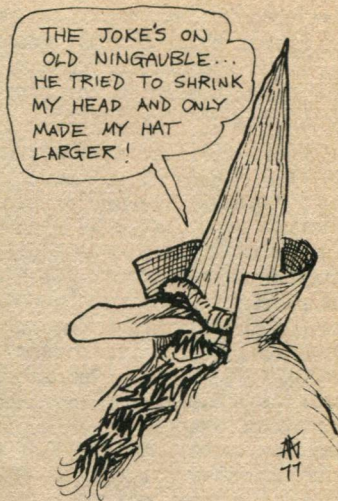
Dunsany again, much earlier in *TIME AND THE GODS*:

"And Monith said:

"He, too, hath offended, for he was angry as thy horse struck him, and the gods smite anger. And his anger and his curses doom him to a journey without rest as they also doom thee."

Then said the King:

"Thou that sittest upon Ah-moon in the Temple of Azure,



dreaming thy dreams and making prophecies, forsee the ending of this weary quest and tell me where it shall be?"

(p. 200, Modern Library edition)

Lastly, there's Clark Ashton Smith, the only one of the *WEIRD TALES* creepie-crawlies school to archaize:

"Give, give O magnanimous and liberal lord of the poor," cried the beggar.

Avoosl Wuthoquann, the richest and most avaricious of moneylenders in all Commorion, and, by that token, in the whole of Hyperboreax, was startled from his train of revery by the sharp, eery cicada-like voice. He eyed the supplicant with acidulous disfavor. His meditations, as he walked homeward that evening, had been splendidly replete with the shining of costly metals, with coins and ingots and gold-work and argentry, and the flaming or sparkling of many-tinted rills, rivers and cascades, all flowing toward the coffers of Avoosl Wuthoquann. Now the vision had flown; and this untimely and obstreperous voice was imploring him for alms.

(First paragraph to *THE WEIRD AVOOSL WUTHOQUANN*.)"

What have we here? Why was it that my friend couldn't read this stuff? Or could he read some of it. His tastes were rather odd. He liked Smith, but found Morris impenetrable. I think he may have liked the grim irony of Smith, and for

that reason been able to tolerate the style, while Morris' sweetness and light romances bored him, and he blamed the tedium on the style. Yes, but what do we have here?

Four different styles from three different writers, all roughly fitting into the category of "archaic". On close examination we find Morris is slipping into Middle English. "Whilom" is a Middle English word, and it means "once" or "once upon a time." Chaucer began some of his tales that way. Also "hight" is Middle English, meaning "named" or "called". So, once there was a cheaping town named Utterhay. Aside from these two words, the rest of the sentence is rather ordinary. Morris didn't go in for odd grammatical constructions. His "archaism" was vocabulary.

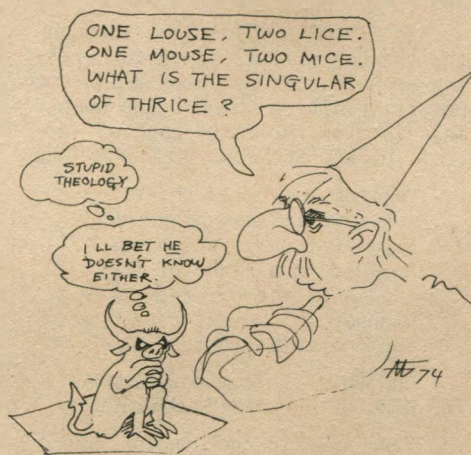
Dunsany in THE KING OF ELFLAND'S DAUGHTER uses few words not in the present American speech. He doesn't use old forms of address either. Notice that the witch is referred to as "you". He does use the word "wroth" but nothing else is unusual in his vocabulary. However, there are odd constructions, "Let not" instead of "don't let", lots of sentences beginning with "And" (maybe as many as a third of them in the entire book) and lots of short Zeleznish, one-sentence paragraphs. This "archaism", if we may call it that, is a kind of structural eccentricity. Yet when we go back to Dunsany's earlier work (ELFLAND was published in 1924, TIME AND THE GODS in 1906) we find a much different style, more like a pastiche of the King James Bible. This is quite old-fashioned. It's early 17th century formal literary prose.

Clark Ashton Smith is something quite different. He uses a few thees and thous, but his vocabulary comes straight out of the Oxford Unabridged (which Smith read cover to cover in pursuit of self-education). His sentences are usually compound and compound-complex, but there's nothing really unusual about that. To me at least Smith is simply verbose, easily the most unreadable of the lot. I have the Middle English vocabulary necessary to master Morris, and Dunsany in any of his guises never presented a problem. Whatever he was, Dunsany was always very spare and concise, while Smith wastes words wholesale. This makes his style more related to, say, Henry James than to Thomas Mallory. He just used all these amazingly cumbersome sentences, with a vast horde of unnecessary adjectives. (Why not "the cicada-like voice", conveying the dry rasping sound desired, instead of "the sharp, eery cicada-like voice"?) Smith's isn't archaic at

all, just poorly written. So people who find "archaic" style tedious draw a few yawns from Smith and say, "Oh, it's unreadably archaic."

Ursula LeGuin in her splendid little book, FROM ELFLAND TO POUGH-KEEPSIE (Pendragon Press, 1973) warns against the dangers of archaism. It's very difficult, she says, to get the grammar right. You mess up in the subjunctive, and come out sounding like a medieval version of Tonto. Maybe a few linguists today can, after hard study, write grammatically correct Elizabethan prose, or Malloryean prose, or Chaucerian prose. It's difficult, not achieved by a few thees and thous.

This is all very true, but I think the problem of reader resistance to "archaic" prose goes deeper. My story (which has since been



published in FANTASY AND TERROR) was archaic only in its thee and thou dialogue, and I don't think I made many grammatical errors because there was very little conversation, and all of it was in the simple present or simple past. There seems to be an ingrained reaction in a lot of readers, that makes them shut the book as soon as the author starts dropping funny words on the page. It's as if the reader expects it to be tedious, boring, verbose, etc. as soon as the "thees" start hatching.

Some of it may be conditioning, caused by writing like this:

"And lo! even the brutish man did grow weary, and the hot breath and body-stink to come from him; and surely who shall wonder, for always he did rush to and fro upon me, with the monstrous rock to crush me. And suddenly I leapt unto the right of the man, thinking within me that I did perceive a chance that I should cut him upon that side; but truly, he was less awearied

than I did know; for he came very sharp upon me, and had me between him and the wall of the rock; and surely I had no room to make escape, and had died in a moment, but that I made a sudden sham toward the left with the Diskos, as that I should leap that way."

Huh? What? That's from William Hope Hodgson's THE NIGHT LAND, Volume 1, p. 207 of the Ballentine edition. It should be enough to show you why THE NIGHT LAND is one of the least-finished works in all fantasy literature, penetrated only by a brave few. Something Hodgson never seemed to realize was that writing, even highly eccentric, highly archaic writing, has to be good writing and it has to follow the rules.

The Rules were condified by Mark Twain in his famous essay on Fenimore Cooper. They're mostly common sense, and some relevant ones are:

- "13. Use the right word, not its second cousin.
14. Eschew surplusage.
16. Avoid slovenliness of form.
17. Use good grammar.
18. Employ a simple and straightforward style."

Clark Ashton Smith, the one-man dictionary, would have been well advised to heed Rule 13. The rare is not always the best word, especially if it isn't in the reader's vocabulary and is not available to him in a standard dictionary. The result then is a failure to communicate. Rule 14 also is a good idea. Smith could have dispensed with a lot of his adjectives and unnecessary clauses. Economy makes for good reading, which is why Dunsany is much more readable than Smith ever is. But then so is the Bible. Hodgson is not. He's probably the single greatest offender against all these rules that anyone would care to find. Rule 17, "slovenliness of form" could mean a lot of things. I interpret it as meaning poorly chosen words and phrases, foggy imagery and descriptions so imprecise as to confuse the reader. Hodgson is one of the great masters of the imprecise description. You read a paragraph or two of his stuff and shake your head. You're not quite sure what he said. In the passage I quoted, I think I can make some sense out of all the murky, but not much. I visualize the hero on his back, and this little guy with a big rock is running up and down his chest. "To and fro upon me" is what the author said, didn't he? No, to be honest, I think Hodgson in his stumbling, inarticulate way is

trying to say that the man's opponent wouldn't stand still. I think. You can never be sure in THE NIGHT LAND.

Use good grammar, Rule 17. Of course, but Ms. LeGuin says this gets quite complicated in the obsolete forms. Does it matter if this grammar is so esoteric that only a few scholars can be sure? Hodgson seems to have tried to follow that line of logic, but tripped up for this reason: grammar evolves out of usage and has a purpose. A grammatical sentence is usually more precise and less ambiguous than an ungrammatical one. If it isn't the language will change until it is (eventually). Now unless there's a typo in the Ballentine edition of THE NIGHT LAND, Hodgson's grammar is questionable. "Even the brutish man did grow weary, and the hot breath and body-stink to come from him..." The "did" is unnecessary but tolerable, I'd say. The use of the infinite "to come" right there isn't. It's just plain wrong. He means "came". The passage reads like a bad translation into English made by a non-English speaker.

Then again was Hodgson writing English or something that vaguely resembles it? One admirer I know claims that Hodgson's illiteracies (I compare the style to Doc Smith writing Mallory) are consistent throughout, and therefore THE NIGHT LAND is written in an artificial language (or at least grammar) of Hodgson's own invention. Maybe so. Certainly it isn't the 17th century English it purports to be (the book is narrated by a 17th century man), as can be quickly seen by a comparison to real 17th century writings, such as those of Cotton Mather or Samuel Pepys.

Just for exercise let's translate this sample of Hodgsonian into English. I'll have to take liberties with some of the vaguer phrases, since I'm not entirely fluent in the original tongue:

"And lo! the brutish man grew weary, and hot breath and the stink of his body came from him. Still he raced back and forth with the rock trying to crush me. Suddenly I leapt to his right, attempting to cut him on that side, but still there was strength left in him, and he came at me sharply, trapping me between him and wall of the rock. I would have died that instant, had I not made a sudden feint to the left with the Diskos, as if I would leap that way."

I don't claim that's a particu-

larly good piece of writing, but it is English, and it does preserve the thought to the original Hodgson. And, my version is 94 words to the original 132. How about that.

So here's a rule that Twain never mentioned, and LeGuin overlooked

Write in the language of your audience. The problem with the very worst of the would-be archaizers is that their conceptions of what old-fashioned English was like are so bizarre that the resultant mess is hardly recognizable as the native tongue at all. Hodgson wasn't a true archaizer at all. He wrote in something other than English, and we can't date it. His sort of shenanigans gave archaic fantasy a bad name.

Still, I think there is conditioning in the modern reader against this sort of thing. Maybe horrible examples had something to do with it. I rather think they did. Somebody



wouldn't be convinced that archaic English is difficult and convoluted unless he actually encountered something purporting to be archaic English that was. Maybe with some people it's their own failing. Their verbal range isn't good enough to take it in. These are the people who struggle over Shakespeare and can't make any sense at all of Chaucer. But this can't account for everyone who runs into trouble with archaic fantasy. Inept attempts at writing in a difficult and artificial style

may have a lot to do with it.

Why, you may ask, do the writers persist in writing that way, then, when they are in danger of losing most of their audience (and their chances of selling story) by some sort of instant mental block? They'll argue with you that great writers, like Dunsany and maybe E.R. Eddison (who was one of those rare people who could write the old stuff correctly), pulled it off, and read avidly today. They did it to achieve a distancing from the ordinary. Their lofty characters have to speak a lofty language. It wouldn't do to have the King of Elfland say, "Howdy, Bud. Ain't seen you in a while!"

I agree, but I don't see how lofty language has to be archaic. It has to be lofty. Devoid of comical colloquialisms, devoid of contemporary references which would be anachronistic in the story (the King of Elfland does not compare a dragon to a steamroller, since there are no steamrollers in his world), more formal in tone, but not necessarily using obsolete words and phrases. The fantasy writer is in a different situation than the historical, contemporary, or even the science fiction writer, all of whom desire closeness, a sense of every-day realism. The fantasy writer wants the opposite, because he's telling a legend or a fable, something larger than life. But there's no reason it has to be written through the nose. Homer didn't do it that way, and neither did the BEOWULF poet. It isn't necessary to get your other-worldly effect that way, especially if most readers don't like it. (I would guess that most readers read the great fantasists despite their difficult styles, not because of them. Those of us who love graceful language for its own sake are among the select few.)

Here's the clincher. The all-time fantasy best-seller, THE LORD OF THE RINGS isn't written in a noticeably archaic style. Neither is THE BROKEN SWORD. Neither is ONCE AND FUTURE KING. Neither is, for that matter, A WIZARD OF EARTHSEA. Behold:

"He set to bathing the little boy with cold rain water that they brought new-fallen from out of doors, and he began to say one of the spells of feverstay. The spell took no hold and made no whole, and suddenly he thought the child was dying in his arms.

Summoning his power all at once and with no thought for himself, he sent his spirit out after the child's spirit, to bring it back home. He called the child's name, "Ioeth!"

Thinking some faint answer came in his inward hearing he pursued, calling once more. Then he saw the little boy running fast and far ahead of him down a dark slope, the side of some vast hill. There was no sound. The stars above the hill were no stars his eyes had ever seen. Yet he knew the constellations by name: The Sheaf, The Door, The One Who Turns, The Tree. They were those stars that do not set, that are not paled by the coming of day. He had followed the dying child too far."

(p. 90) (Gollancz Edition)

That is one of the marvellous bits of fantasy writing I've ever read. Notice, no archaisms. The proper effects are achieved by such elementary methods as giving everyone names which do not derive from historical cultures -- Ged, Ioeth -- inventing new words like "feverstay" which explain themselves while fitting something just right, and by the more complex matter of accepting and conveying a completely different worldview, in which it is entirely possible for a wizard to pursue a dying soul into the land of the death; The reader may look on with wonder -- he's supposed to -- but he also must be drawn into the scene, to accept the experience. A fantasy novel is written with an entirely new set of rules for running the universe, and these rules have to penetrate the very thought of the story, or else it will ring false. It is a matter of language. It's a matter of writing naturally, clearly, and avoiding anachronisms, but it's not, I don't think, a matter of obsolete pronouns and strange usages. You can only travel over the rainbow or reach the edge of the world because you believe you can, not because you talk funny about the prospect.

THE XEROXED FORM LETTER I NEVER FINISHED READING

'WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN RECEIVING SOME OF MY MANUSCRIPTS, WITH A VIEW TO PUBLICATION IN YOUR MAGAZINE?

'I AM AT PRESENT ENGAGED IN WRITING A NOVEL THAT OUTLINES THE HISTORY OF THE HUMAN RACE IN TERMS OF A SUBTLE MANIPULATION BY VISITORS FROM ELSEWHERE IN THE UNIVERSE. THE NOVEL WILL EXPLAIN THE BIBLE....'

MONOLOG CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

laws (for instance) to put yourself in a position to be a Big Daddy, to be in a position to give special favors (in exchange for...?) and to be necessary, to seem to be an important part of government. God forbid that the voters should ever perceive legislators and most elected officials as con artists engaged in make-work and image-making, as always liars, sometimes outright thieves, with the morals and ethics (behind the facade) of the most blatant sociopaths.

Is there a mini-rebellion against too-big government? It'll be short-lived, as one politician-caused crisis after another impells a security-seduced populace to turn to these same sanctimonious bastards for solutions.

These men will only screw things up more---requiring (how delicious) even more screwing. Guess who is the screwer and who the screwee?

There is only one path for the individual who wants to be as free as possible from these slimy toads; make yourself and your family as independent as possible, as secure as possible, from their greedy fingers and power-laden hands. Vote against them and their laws, sure (for all the good it will do), but also get out of personal debt, get into gardening, and general self-sufficiency to the greatest degree possible.

Also, you might think about using their laws and regulations against them as much as possible.

Also--buy tools, locks, guns, and a wood stove for emergencies. Insulate your house to the hilt. If you're young save every penny and buy a used house and fix it up yourself. And buy with an eye to gardens and fences and neighbors.

Enough. This was supposed to be a note about inflation and look what happened.

MAGAZINES RECEIVED

THE DIVERSIFIER--January 1977 issue, published and edited by C.C. Clingan, POB 1836, Oroville, CA 95965. \$1.25 single issue. Six for \$5.75.

A misused cover by Jude Fulkerson. The standout item in the issue is the long article by Marion Zimmer Bradley in which she analyzes and discusses her work from the beginning of her writing career to the present. I'm going to get the reprint rights from her if possible and run it in the August issue.

THE DIVERSIFIER also has a useful column of small-press market information for beginning writers.

WHISPERS #9, December, 1976 issue, edited and published by Stuart David Schiff, Box 904, Chapel Hill, NC 27514. \$2.00 per single copy, 4 for \$7.00.

Another striking cover by Steve Fabian.

Good fiction by R.A. Lafferty, Lee Weinstein, Paul Bond, Philip Nolan, and Dennis Etchison.

Lovely art folios, the one by Marcus Boas in full color.

Stuart serves his readers well with a review section which mentions new fantasy/horror plans and publications. WHISPERS is a highest-quality labor-of-love zine.

2-5-77 I see in the paper today that Oklahoma is thinking of going to executions-by-injections ("ultra-short-acting barbiturates with a chemical paralytic agent"), thereby making death as humane and quiet as possible. The politicians are turning to this, reluctantly, I presume, because repairing their electric chair would cost \$62,000 and the cost of a gas chamber is around a quarter of a million dollars. And of course shooting and hanging provokes so much furor and bad publicity...

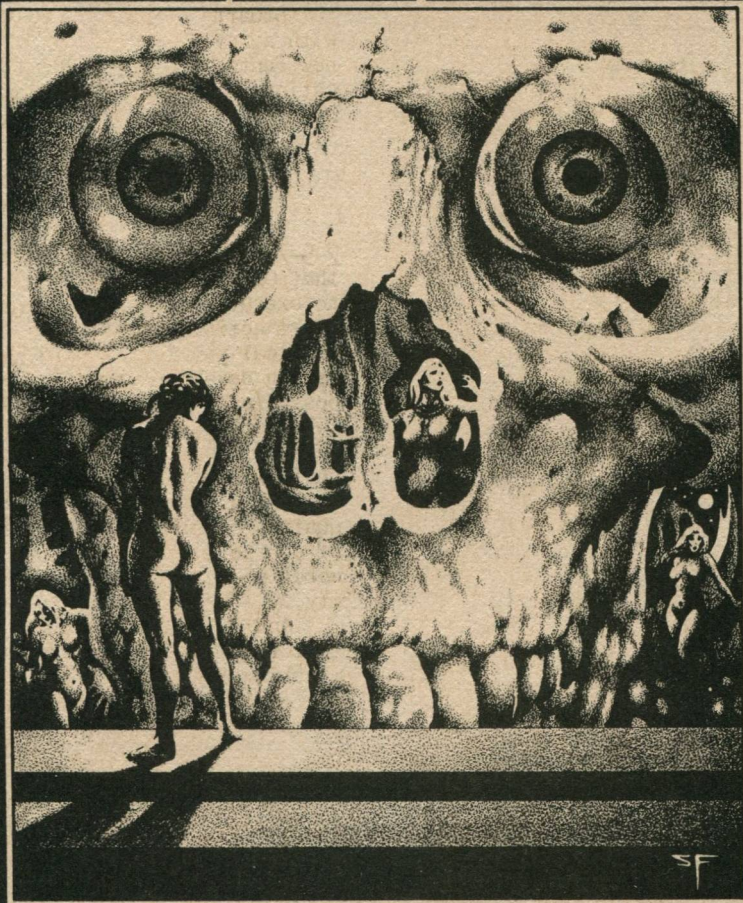
And I heard on the news today that the state of Washington is also thinking of going the injection route, as an option for the condemned man. How considerate.

Our bill for electricity for January was \$19.54. The previous month it was \$15.65. Why the jump? That's the catch-22 multiplier going into action: Pacific Power & Light are entitled, by law, to a certain percentage of profit and a certain amount of money to invest in future power sources. They have been granted 10-15% rate increases in each of the past four years... and just a couple months ago still another 24% rate increase---for the homeowner---was granted; this bill is the first evidence of that increase. The lovely catch is that as people respond to rate increases by cutting down on use of electricity, the company finds its revenues not increasing at expected rates---so they ask for, and get, increased rates to insure their profits and expenses... They getcha no matter what you do.

There will come a time, of course, when the utility rates will be so high that it will be economical to switch to by-then more efficient, easily installed solar-power devices.

That will be interesting, when significant numbers of pissed-off

Whispers



homeowners switch to self-contained power units and cut loose from the utilities. The utilities will cry that the solar-power units are unsafe, and etc., and try to get the state legislatures to pass a law against them.

As I read the WALL STREET JOURNAL, BUSINESS WEEK, etc., I see more and more ads and discussion about small computers---desk-top jobs, and talk of their beginning use in homes.

Is this the wave of the future? I think so. Micro-technology is making the world different. The home computer connection is coming and it is coming because it will involve tremendous savings in energy, time, and money. You'll do all your banking by the home computer...saving time, gas,

and money. You'll be able to button on the news for your screen and watch a big-print rundown of story leads, choosing which to read, which to pass. Punch on sports, comics, weather, business news... and read at your own speed.

And as I mentioned last issue, you'll be able to punch for the latest issue of favorite magazines, with an option of having a permanent, printed-on-paper copy mailed to you for your collection. Or you can have your computer simply remember the entire issue on a memory chip/disc/tape/whatever, and be charged a bit extra, perhaps.

I suspect the postal service will wither away to a mere skeleton of its present self.

Because your home computer can

be set to record incoming letters, and play them back to you on its screen. The bills. The junk ads. And think of the energy and resources the home computer will save! All that paper, all that transport, all that labor and energy and time.

You could live anywhere. All you'd need would be a link by wire or radio receiver-transmitter to the nearest local computer net.

So I'm becoming optimistic about the future. I think this electronic revolution is coming. I only hope the vested interests in the endangered industries (who also must see it coming) don't manage to stall or kill it aborning.

MAGAZINE RECEIVED

GALILEO, Number Two. \$1.50
Charles C. Ryan, Editor.
Published by Avenue Victor Hugo
Publishers, 339 newbury St., Boston,
MA 02115.

In a letter accompanying a review copy of #2, Charles Ryan, the editor, said, 'We have, because of numerous considerations, moved back the publication date...to the 15th of the month in which it's printed, rather than the first, as with the first issue. And, because the Postal Service seems to have lost more than the normal 5% of the subscribers copies, we postponed mailing issue 2 until this week ((letter dated Dec. 30, 1976)) (after the Christmas rush). (One subscriber wrote and said he received the front panel of the envelope we use and nothing else, to give an example of the postal efficiency.)'

My comment on that is that he must have an incredibly lazy, careless and criminal local post office, because 5% loss is not normal. I get word of maybe two or three copies lost per SFR mailing. Maybe .1% loss. But I bundle and sack the copies myself, and direct the sacks to the appropriate city or sectional sorting center. Thus handling is minimized by machines and people.

GALILEO#2 is a better magazine than #1, by far. The cover, by Thomas Barber, titled "Rendezvous," is a good, professional sf cover painting, and the bacover by Barber, is a filler, a static painting in reds and yellows, titled "Refueling."

My overall impression of this issue is one of interesting goings-on; the science articles by Hal Clement and the Energy Research Group, the play by Perley P. Sheehan & Robert H. Davis, the long poem by Diane Ackerman, the photos of contributors, the review sections by Andrew Adams Whyte and the reviewing staff, the letters section, and the fiction.

The fiction isn't much, with the exceptions of "Recompense" by Jacqueline Lichenberg in which she convincingly shows a slice of alien life-cycle; and "Ill Wind" by Glen Bever, which has cliché fever ala ASTOUNDING/ANALOG, but is a grabber.

The interior art isn't good enough, although I liked the old-time cut for the letter section, and the heading for the reviews.

CONCLUSION: the magazine could be successful if it can build circulation and sales past the break-even point soon. Depends on how much money the publisher, Vincent McCaffrey, is willing to lose. The variety of contents and the decreased emphasis on fiction is a strong point. GALILEO is subtitled 'Magazine of Science & Fiction.'

BOOKS RECEIVED

TWILIGHT OF THE CITY

By Charles Platt
Macmillan, \$8.95

Hard on the heels of Charles' letter and copy of SWEET EVIL, this, his latest sf novel, arrived.

Set in the near future, it's a grim when-things-fall-apart story; the rich and the military have looted the country and then retreat to enclaves to live in feudal opulence, leaving the middle and lower classes to starve.

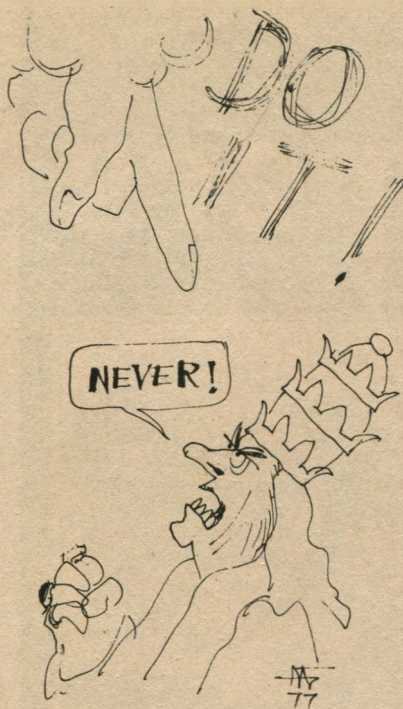
It's the story of Michael Caiden, a 'suicide rock' music writer and Lisa, a tough-minded young woman of the streets, who live through the hate, lust, greed and savagery to eventually find a life in an emerging farmer/trading-center society.

The book has good moments, but it doesn't ring true in many ways. I don't believe the superrich and the military would first proclaim martial law and expropriate land and wealth only to immediately say to hell with it and retreat to their middlewest enclaves. And I find it odd and unconvincing that Michael, so clear-eyed and realistic, should be able to idealistically engineer a mass-murder of rival local armed groups with the expectation that now at last the local area was free of rule-by-force and could live in peace and freedom. Too, the final bloodbath was too easy and neat.

PERRY RHODAN #108

"Duel Under the Double Sun"
By K.H. Scheer
Ace 66092, \$1.25

This "issue" of the bookazine also has a 'shock short', "Extenuating Circumstances" by Ann Orhelein, and the conclusion of a long story by Clyde Crane Campbell, "Inflexure," plus the usual departments of hype.



COLLISION COURSE Ace 11510, \$1.50
RECALLED TO LIFE Ace 71085, \$1.75
THE SEED OF EARTH Ace 75875, \$1.50
THE SILENT INVADERS Ace 76391, \$1.50
STEPSONS OF TERRA Ace 78600, \$1.50
NEXT STOP THE STARS Ace 57420, \$1.50
"Slaves of the Star Giants"
"The Songs of Summer"
"Hopper"
"Blaze of Glory"
"Warm Man"

By Robert Silverberg

COMMENT: All the above novels and the short story collection are from Bob's early days as a professional. Each volume has a very interesting new (1976) introduction in which he describes the background of the writing of the book, gives a view of his self at the time, and of others in the field. Must-reads for the true fan. I'm going to try to get the rights to reprint these introductions in SFR.

2-8-77 Word yesterday via a clip from G.W. Rudolph (THE PLAIN DEALER, an Ohio newspaper, Feb. 3, 1977) that Edmond Moore Hamilton, 72, had died.

Another of the great pulp sf writers is gone.

I'm glad I scheduled the interview for this issue.

There is no way the Congress can vote no on Carter's \$50. rebate plan, after having voted not to de-

ny themselves a huge salary increase. Voters---enough of them, anyway---have long memories, and that would be Too Much.

Carter had his first press conference today. He 'fielded' about five direct questions on national defense policy and managed, by dint of dancing, evasion, sidestepping and artful deception to avoid giving a direct answer to any of them.

Carter's first choice to head the CIA, Ted Sorenson, was too obviously Liberal and inexperienced to get past the crawl of the defense-minded old conservatives in the Senate.

So the Carter advisers---probably Brzezinski---went looking for a suitable 'respectable' Rockefeller agent to fill the position. They came up with Admiral Stansfield Turner, establishment all the way, who is (as usual, for the CIA) a member of Rockefeller's Council on Foreign Relations and a contributor to FOREIGN AFFAIRS, the CFR house organ.

The burden of Turner's defense philosophy can be understood by this quote from his recent FOREIGN AFFAIRS article:

"A focus on trends rather than statistics will make the dialogue of the naval balance ((with Russia)) more substantial and productive."

"...A sensible approach will be to ask not 'who is ahead?' but to determine whether our naval forces in hand, considering the other forces on the planet, can carry out our national purpose."

Guess who decides our national purpose.

It has been decided that the United States is not to be the strongest nation in the world, but only strong enough to carry out policy. The policy, of course, is dependant on available--or planned--forces and capability. This suggests that sometime in the Carter presidency we will be in a position of inability to intervene or make a credible show of force when Russia makes another move---perhaps in Africa.

It figures that there will be a long-term 'trend' toward socialist conquest of Africa---smaller nations being "absorbed" by larger, stronger ones. The tribal nations will be socialized. Their 'old-fashioned' ways and culture will be radically remolded to a new socialist people's ideal...like in Cambodia, maybe.

It's sickening.

THE WORLD IS COMING TO AN

---Jim Hershberg

BOOK RECEIVED

MOONSTAR ODYSSEY

By David Gerrold

Signet W7372, \$1.50

This is the first part of a saga novel, and as such is mal-proportioned, seemingly overwritten, and frustrating at the end.

It's the opening segment of a life story...of Jobe, a child on the planet Satlik which had been colonized thousands of years before by humans.

But there had been a mutation, a change in the way sex is determined. Now children at around age 13 enter a period where they can choose to be male or female, after having a chance to try both sex roles and sexual organs. Yet the society is she-oriented.

Satlik is a fragile planet: it has to have vast shields in orbit to protect its farms and peoples from the too-hot sun.

And then, as Jobe comes into her period of choosing, an Erdik spaceship tears through the Lagin Shield and great storms, heat, and death overwhelms her homeland.

And that's about where the first volume ends.

David has gone into great detail concerning the sexual/cultural/social life and emotions of these people. I'm inclined to feel he has overloaded the first book with this information, and indulged himself in some of Jobe's adolescent introspections.

There is an element of dishonesty in this practice of publishing a long, long novel in blind segments like this; nowhere does the publisher tell the reader this is essentially an incomplete story.

2-10-77 *Sigh* I've been putting off a lot of letters-to-be-published, and a lot of accumulated books-to-be-at-least-listed, and, too, I have a few other comments.... To arms, the sleeves are coming! No, that doesn't sound right.

There is something about our new UN ambassador, Andrew Young, and his racism, that bothers me.

He has been hopping around southern-central Africa sucking up to various black dictators and quasi-dictator socialist heads of state of late, making headlines and putting down the evil white government of Rhodesia. He has no trouble calling Ian Smith an 'outlaw' while saying nary a word about raiding guerrilla murders of white missionaries.

Come to think of it, I didn't see or hear of any Carter comment either. Not even a tsk, tsk. Our

new President feels deeply for Russian dissidents but not for Catholic missionaries. Not that I approve missionaries. But the selective outrage, the hypocrisy, is so obvious.

No one seems to give a shit about the people of Rhodesia (black and white), their welfare, their future. The black revolutionaries put dogma and force over mercy and common sense. They, like all elitists and I-know-best and the-end-justifies-the-means types don't really care about the people they are attempting to 'free'. They want power over those people, and they'll kill as many of them as they must in order to get that power.

And Andrew Young thinks the Cuban army in Angola is a good thing, a 'stabilizing' force. Yeah, and it's also necessary to keep the socialists in power. Something like our expeditionary force in Vietnam for so long. I wonder why he was against us being in Asia but thinks it's okay for Cubans to have an army in Africa?

I've been wanting to comment on the hypocrisy of the Republican party for a few weeks. Now something has happened that triggers me.

They wonder why they can't get a lot of working-class people and oldsters and youngsters to join them.

Their problem is they have blinders on. They prate about free enterprise, about getting the government out of the marketplace, about too much regulation, about high taxes....

I AM GROSS,
MOROSE AND
LOQUACIOUS.

NO?

GROSS, MOROSE
AND PROLIX?

NO.

I SHOULDN'T
TALK SO MUCH,
ANYWAY.



But they only mean freedom for business. When it comes to freedom in other areas of life they are all for government controls.

The publisher of HUSTLER was convicted and jailed recently, and I'm sure 99% of the remaining registered Republicans cheered that conviction.

Republicans are against a woman choosing to have or not have an abortion. They oppose ERA. They oppose virtually all moves for greater individual liberty.

They can't have it both ways. And they'll continue to die on the vine until they understand that freedom to smoke pot and read a porno magazine is inseparable from freedom to run a business without the government screwing it up every step of the way.

And the Liberals who want personal and publishing freedoms but also want to control business and tax people to death for social equality reasons have also got to understand something about sauce for the goose.

Their response is always, 'Yes, but---'

Yeah, I saw ROLLERBALL last night, and remarked again to myself how much people fear computers. It is now mandatory that in every s-f movie a computer must go insane, break down or self-destruct.

The plot of ROLLERBALL teetered on the absurd premise that a clutch of all-powerful world-giant ruling corporations would suddenly decide that a sports champion at the tail-end of his career, must be forced to retire during the playoffs, because he was too much a hero, too superior and therefore a danger to the 'team' concept and necessary de-emphasis of individuality and individual worth.

Why it took them ten years to tumble to his excellence, and why they insist he retire right NOW, is not explained. Nor their unwillingness to simply have him killed. God knows governments of every stripe always have a special way of eliminating dangerous radicals and various square pegs. The corporations: Energy, Food, Transport, etc. were shown to be utterly ruthless.

Ah, the contempt movie producers must have for their audiences.

Science fiction movies are still, apparently, still seen as vehicles for Messages, and therefore credible stories are not important. Messages, and I may add, directorial indulgences, are the thing. I wish they'd stuff those messages and self-indulgences up their baboon behinds.

The reason I have to do a catch-up operation here is that I've been

putting long hours into typing all the names, addresses and subscription info onto Scriptomatic cards from the Elliott stencils, of all the subscribers, the complimentaries and the retail outlets. So far I'm up to 60000-60699 on the zipcode scale. About halfway through the ordeal. The mail has piled up for two days, too. *Sigh*

I have a short LETTER FROM ROGER ZELAZNY:

2-6-77

'Things are pleasant here ((Santa Fe, New Mexico)), save for a bit of wind. The arrival & aftermath of the baby (Trent; 11-28-76) threw me off my writing schedule, but I am almost back in the groove now, with a short story titled "No Award" in the current (Feb.) issue of THE SATURDAY EVENING POST & the fifth & possibly final Amber book (THE COURTS OF CHAOS) about a third completed. I hope to finish it this spring & see it in print about a year from then; and while hoping, I might as well hope for its serialization before that time. That's about it for the moment.

'I now have a heavy, swiveling, reclining chair in a new office, so that I can sprawl with even greater hedonistic abandon with my favorite typewriter.'

I had asked Roger if he still wrote while reclining on a sofa with his portable typer on his belly.

Congratulations on your new son, Roger. Will you be watching him, in years to come, for writing talent?

Now a short LETTER FROM ELINOR BUSBY:

February 4, 1977

'I'm reading SFR at work, since most of my employers are at a meeting in Las Vegas and have just come upon your review of XAVIERA'S SUPERSEX. You ask if Xaviera wrote it all by herself. I'm sure not, and I think she wrote it with Florence King, the woman who wrote SOUTHERN LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. I know Florence was writing a book with Xaviera (mentioned it about a year ago); this sounds as if it must be the one. The chapter titles you quote are definitely Florence King.

'Hey, although Buz is the SFR subscriber, I read it, too. My favorite part is the interviews. I love to know how people think and talk. This was a good issue---two interviews for the price of one.

'I was fascinated by the column by John Brunner about Aldomet. I immediately got out my PDR (Physicians' Desk Reference) and they list all the adverse reactions that John experienced---and more---but describe them as 'infrequent'. How-

ever, I know another SF writer who, on high blood pressure medication, found it made her unable to write.

'At any rate, I'm extremely gratified to find that John, off Aldomet, has quite low blood pressure now. That's very encouraging.'

You'll never know how close I came to shoe-horning the Tim Kirk interview into last issue, too.

An M.D. who is an SFR reader asked what John's dosage of Aldomet was. John?

Now we come to the vitriol. A letter that starts off with destruction for Darrell Schweitzer, and then takes another view of John Brunner's ordeal with the drug. In this corner, a LETTER FROM CHARLES PLATT:

February 3, 1977

'Thanks for issue #20. The Haldeman interview was outstanding (Haldeman's part of it was, anyway). It makes an encouraging change to read succinct, sensible statements from someone with energy and purpose who knows what he's doing, enjoys doing it, and is good at it. His lack of pretension is also refreshing. The only flaw is in your interviewer, the Peter Weston of American fandom, who came off like a backward child trying the patience of a gifted instructor who had better things to do than listen to irritatingly pedestrian, shortsighted questions. I wish you'd give Schweitzer a rest. He is very, very tedious.

'John Brunner's column bothered me a lot. In the past I have been immensely helped by modern pharmaceuticals myself, so it upsets me to see a rational person embarking on a witch-hunt against them. Someone who skimmed John's column might get the impression that the drug he is talking about (Aldomet) is a tranquilizer, but it isn't---it is specifically for reducing high blood pressure, and John's severe side-effects, though known (they are listed in my layman's guide to prescription drugs) are unusual.

'John seems amazingly naive; don't we all know by now that drugs can have side-effects? Shouldn't it be a common-sense reaction to suspect that a personality disturbance might be associated with taking a new drug?

'Why did John wait nearly a year before discontinuing the dosage? Perhaps his doctor didn't warn him in advance of possible side-effects; doctors may refrain from doing so, because there's no point in making the patient unnecessarily anxious, and some patients, anyway, have the facility for developing any symptom

they have been told about in advance. But any doctor ought to be immediately responsive to a subsequent complaint by a patient---especially serious complaints of the kind that John is making. If his doctor was unresponsive under those circumstances, the blame is on the doctor, not the drug.

'In any case, I am skeptical that a drug could be wholly responsible for John's lost year, when there were obvious signs of personality disturbance evident before he started taking it. Blaming a drug is convenient, because it shifts attention away from where the real source of trouble may lie---i.e., the person's own psyche. Psychiatrists call this externalizing a problem, right?

'As for John's apparent notion that Aldomet is particularly hazardous for a writer... This is such a wonderful mixture of elitism and paranoia, I had to laugh. My pharmaceuticals guide assures me that the side-effects John experiences are not just confined to those sensitive, creative people who write books. Ordinary mortals, no matter how humble, may suffer just as much. The only difference is, they lack John's opportunity for publicly raving hysterically about their suffering---in the process scaring a whole lot of people who should not have been scared. Any informed consumer (and I always thought John Brunner believed in consumers being informed) can easily buy one of the many layman's guides to prescription drugs, and check up on what he is swallowing. I suggest John do this, instead of expressing his surprise and outrage, as if he had somehow been tricked.

'Many useful drugs can produce severe side-effects (including some drugs that I take myself). It is ridiculous to suggest that this makes the drugs bad.'

'PS: just got your letter about SWEET EVIL. Thanks for your comments. I wrote the book 5 years ago actually; the process of selling it to Olympia and getting the rights back when they went bankrupt, then going through the same routine with Lancer, then selling it finally to Berkley, took that long. Of course I got paid three times over, so I can't complain.

'The writing is inevitably better than "that sf book" of mine you refer to (probably PLANET OF THE VOLES) ((Yes.)) since "that sf book" was produced in a week when I first arrived in New York and was desperate for cash.

'I agree the violence in SWEET EVIL is something of a turn-off---I really do regard it as a kind of corrupting, distasteful book---and

I'm not quite sure what was going on in my psyche when I wrote it. I know I'd just been reading about the Manson murders....'

((Isn't that known as externalizing a problem?))

'What have you been writing recently? You mention your work less and less in SFR.'

That's because I have stopped writing fiction, period. Because SFR has come to fill up my time more and more. What you're reading now is my work..... And I am very happy with it.

MAGAZINE RECEIVED

FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION. March 1977. Vol. 52, No. 3, Whole number 308. \$1. Ed Ferman, editor & publisher. Cover by Alex Schomburg for "Twilight Reign."

Novella: "Twilight Reign" by Gerald Pearce.

Novelets: "Altar Ego" by Phyllis and Alex Eisenstein.

"To See the Stars That Blind" by Joseph Green and Patrice Milton.

Short Stories: "The Day the Limited Was Late" by Robert F. Young.

"An Altogether Peculiar Summer" by Stephanie Stearns.

"On the Pike" by Dennis Etchison.

Books: Algis Budrys.

Cartoon: Gahan Wilson.

Films: "A Glass Galosh" by Baird Searles.

Science: "The Magic Isle" by Issac Asimov.

Logic Puzzle by Al B. Perlman.

COMMENT: Nothing exceptional in this issue. A solid sf novella, some weak, cliched short stories. "Altar Ego" was a long way to go for very little. "To See the Stars That Blind" was interesting but a downer; tragic

endings in sf and fantasy too often smell like author copout.

I didn't "get" Wilson's cartoon.

BOOKS RECEIVED

THE SHIP OF ISHTAR

By A. Merritt

Avon 28936, \$1.25

'The goddess of love and beauty was adrift on an enchanted ocean in a magic world. The myriad forces of satanic evil plagued the vessel of the red-haired, passionate goddess. Only one man, John Kenton, pitched out of his own time, could save Ishtar's priestess from the black magic which divided her world from ours.'

COMMENT: One of the classics. I still remember this vividly from my reading while in my teens.

THE MERCENARY

By Jerry Pournelle

Pocketbooks 80903, \$1.75

This book is a joining of three novelets published in ANALOG, 1971, 1972, and 1973. There is a new Prologue. The book tells the story of John Christian Falkenberg, officer in the CoDominium space navy, and as the leader of a top-notch force of mercenaries. Falkenberg is a highly Competent Man, and it's a pleasure to identify with him.

THE EYES OF THE OVERWORLD

By Jack Vance

Pocketbook 80904, \$1.50

'The priceless magic eyes of the overworld could exalt their wearer to visions of kingly splendor---or thrust him into blinding madness....'

'Iucounu, the Laughing Magician, dispatches the unwilling thief, Cugel the Clever, on a fantastic quest to capture the enchanted violet lenses. Over forests of unending marvels, he flies to a charmed subworld where sorcery and science are one.'

COMMENT: First published by Ace in 1966. Set in the lands of his THE DYING EARTH. Vance is a great stylist who masks his comments on life behind imagination, color and action.

EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS: THE MAN WHO CREATED TARZAN

By Irwin Porges

Ballantine 25131, \$10.00

Comment: A two-book boxed set, 5-1/2 x 8-1/2 size; the softcover edition of the Brigham Young University Press massive hardback edition which cost \$14.95.

All you'd ever want to know a-

bout Edgar Rice Burroughs, his writings, and Tarzan... Except that Richard Lupoff, something of an expert on Burroughs and Tarzan, found this book wanting in several respects. Nevertheless a massive, detailed work and worth the money. 270 photographs, illustrations, etc.

STAR TREK CONCORDANCE

By Bjo Trimble

Ballantine 25137, \$6.95

A fully-illustrated, comprehensive directory to the TV series (including the animated shows), including casts, plot synopses, a section of fan art, a glossary of words, places, people, events in the future history in which Kirk, Spock, THE ENTERPRISE exist.

COMMENT: The STAR TREK phenomenon goes on and on, astonishing all with its power, durability and meaning.

THE CLEWISTON TEST

By Kate Wilhelm

Pocketbook 80888, \$1.75

Comment: First published in hardback, last year, by Farrar, Straus. This has been getting good reviews. Darrell Schweitzer will have a review of it in his column this issue.

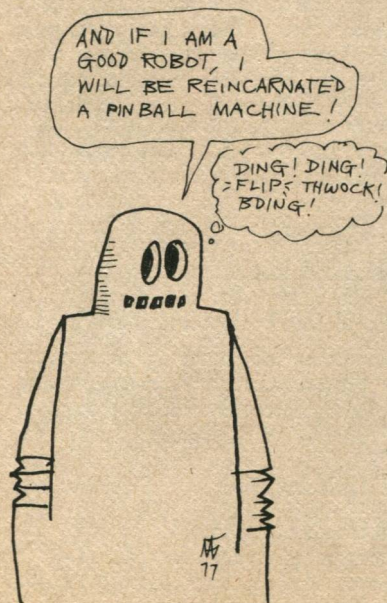
2-13-77 Aha. I was interviewed on the phone today by two fans who are starting a fanzine. They live in Manhattan, Kansas. That much I remember. Their names and the name of their zine is lost. I am hell when remembering names is concerned, usually. This is a usually.

The big media guns are unlimbering with opening salvos about the energy crisis and the need to save energy and how we as a nation waste about 50% of the energy we consume.

It probably escaped almost everybody---a small news item---but President Carter appointed a heavyweight, Henry Kissinger, to a quasi government group called The Alliance To Save Energy (TATSE?). They are to make studies and issue statements and etc.

And, of course, a heavyweight, James Schlesinger, is our new energy czar..er...chief. Consider: These guys do not take figurehead positions; they are going to be doing something. To you.

Kissinger is probably just lending his name. But James S. is a guy used to getting things done. He is used to giving orders. He's tough. And he is of the Rockefeller locus.



They have plans for us. It would not surprise me if in reality the natural gas crisis this past winter was contrived to put the fear of God into the citizens (and a particularly severe winter helped enormously) so that what is to follow the following winter will stampede us into the first steps toward taking our cars away from us. Inevitably, car ownership will become more and more expensive. There will be more and more restrictions... And, to compensate, billions and billions will be poured into improved mass transit systems.

A citizenry without mass private transport is much easier to control. Crime is reduced, too, if the kids don't own cars. Ultimately, I suppose, guns and transport will all be in the hands of our government (for our own good, of course). Give it thirty years.

I have a short, correctional
LETTER FROM PHIL SUNDE:

February 9, 1977

'I enjoyed the Theodore Sturgeon interview in SFR #20 very much. Sturgeon does make a minor mistake when he confuses Mickey Spillane with Dashiell Hammett. Hammett did not copy from Spillane. Hammett wrote his best work for BLACK MASK magazine in the late twenties - early thirties. THE MALTESE FALCON was written in 1929. Spillane was eleven years old, then.'

Thank you, Phil. And now for a letter that features the longest paragraphs this side of Alexei Panshin...

A LETTER FROM DARRELL SCHWEITZER.

Feb 1, 1977

'I had a bizarre experience the other day when I got a letter from a German literary agent who mentioned he had previously written to an Iceland address listed for me in the lettercol of NYCTALOPS, and only when it came back did he realize it was facetious. His English was very good, but obviously he misses puns and in-group references. (These being, of course, the last things we pick up in a foreign language.) The address? C/o Gruntvig's Mead Hall, Hackscribbleovik, Iceland. So I would like to announce, especially for the benefit of foreign correspondents, that all such addresses are to be ignored. Prominent among them are Hokum, massachusetts, Vault of the Nameless Abyss Shaggai, Chang-an China, Via Decadentus Rome, Dumbfoundlingshire Scotland, and various addresses which are clearly in the extra-terrestrial depths of the Outer Darkness.

'I pretty much agree with you on your comments re the faans who faunch for a Hugo but have been passed by. Fannish fandom is now in the extreme minority, and I suspect that as general fandom grows that minority will be relatively smaller yet. Very few, perhaps 5% of fans who attend conventions, know who sawed Courtney's boat, or who Willis was, or what the Great Staple War was about. And I doubt they know that Bloch is Ghod, or who Hoy Ping Pong is, or why you put the 'h' in bheer. As a result a fannish fanzine is an extreme case of the special interest zine, much more limited than a Lovecraftzine like NYCTALOPS or any of the many Robert E. Howard fanzines. Most of the fans I know ha-e had little contact with fannish fandom. Many are surprised, bewildered, and decidedly not interested when I tell them about it. These of course are the same people who made up the 95% of the audience who had very blank looks on their faces at the 1974 Worldcon when the toastmaster's speech was filled with the sort of fannish references (only half of which I understood) which would have made it appropriate for a small, informal regional convention but nothing larger.

'For the Hugo situation I have two su-gestions, one sensible, and one not very sensible. The not very sensible one is this. The title of the Best Amateur Magazine award should be changed to Best Amateur Magazine Except For SFR, ALGOL, and LOCUS. Of course this wouldn't be fair to an outstanding effort like ENERGUMEN which shouldn't stand in second place anything, but it would clear;y state what is really meant. Likewise Best Fan Writer could be changed to Best Fan Writer Except or Geis, Wood and Brown.

'My sensible suggestion is that a new category be instituted: Best Writer of Professional Non-Fiction. In this context "professional" means paid for, so Dick Lupoff's column in ALGOL, for example, would be just as eligible as the prozine book review and science columns, or the AMAZING fanzine column, or your GALAXY column, or the SFR monolog. It is probably too early to institute Best Professional Fan Magazine, because there are only three of them, unless you want to count the paying non-newsstand fiction magazines like GALILEO and WHISPERS.

'I've always considered "professional" to mean paid for above certain levels (Thus a 10th of a cent a word is not professional, but 1/2¢ is.) and so I would consider SFR to be a professional magazine. I have your letters filed away in the Edit-

ors folder, along with those from the newsstand magazines, book publishers, and the various small fictionzines.

'I might mention that the editor of VOID has explained why he doesn't date or number his issues. It's for the noblest of publishing reasons, saving money. He gets better rates from the post office and customs if he calls the issues "books". The box of copies I received was labeled on the customs statement "science fiction anthologies". But we all know it's a magazine the same way we know that when people send fanzines bookrate.... As for finances, the magazine has passed its first anniversary, more than can be said for some US prozines, and had received a grant from the Australian government. So I would guess it's in better shape than it ever was. I'm expecting issue #5 (which I'm in, by the way) soon.

((*Grump* I'm not sure a welfare press handout is a sign of good editing or management.

((And I wonder how the many successful magazine publishers feel about being taxed to support failures and keep competition alive.))

'The inside story on the death of Laser is that the books were selling about 30,000 copies apiece, as undistinguished SF usually does. Harlequin had hoped to reach a much wider audience---the husbands of the women who read their romances---but didn't. Therefore they decided they could make more money by investing the same capital elsewhere.'

((The publisher's mistake was in letting Roger Elwood edit the line. The idea of simple, fast-paced SF for a mass audience was okay, but Elwood didn't stick to the original concept---he edited for the hard-core readers and satisfied very few. The books were mostly too "heavy" and in-groupish to attract and keep the mass of potential readers who are not intimately familiar with SF themes and conventions. And the books were too cerebral and too tame.))

BOOKS RECEIVED

SOME OF YOUR BLOOD

By Theodore Sturgeon
Ballantine 25712, \$1.50.

Not quite as shocking as when it was originally published in 1961, but a solid exploration of a strange psycho-sexual adjustment.

THE SEEKING SWORD

By Jaan Kangilaski
Ballantine 25650, \$1.95

'George Quinterus was seeking the reason for an outbreak of senseless murders--each one committed

with a mysterious, ill-fashioned sword. Buried in the musty pages of ancient books, he found that the primitive weapon had been fashioned eons ago at a time of shamanistic spells and forgotten knowledge.

'Had this weapon somehow come down through the ages, its thirst for vengeance never sated? Or was it being used by a mysterious league of thrill-killers, able to control minds at a distance?

'In either case the sword was drawing innocent blood and ruling its possessors with a dark power that only the unfortunate chosen could understand---but never resist. Somehow, Quinterus could not abandon his reckless quest...then he suddenly and inexplicably found himself presented with the sword!'

COMMENT: Looks like a good read. The Darrell K. Sweet cover is very effective; a grabber. He is one of the very best fantasy artists.



EXCALIBUR

By Sanders Anne Laubenthal
Ballantine 25635, \$1.95

'Rhodri had appeared out of the darkness. He was an archeologist on a strange and curious quest for the mythic 12th-Century castle of Prince Madoc.

'Still, Rhodri sought even more than he admitted. For he was a Pen-dragon---a soul descendant of King Arthur---and his quest was for the sword of swords.

'But his secret was known through the Tarot and whispered on the breath of lost years. And the evil of the

centuries lay in wait. For soon Rhodri and his beloved would be forced to face the reincarnation of ancient terrors---and the rage of unholy vengeance in a realm of everlasting time.'

Comment: First published in 1973. This edition has a fine fantasy montage cover by Darrell Sweet.

THE SENTINAL

By Jeffrey Konvitz
Ballantine 25641, \$1.95

'A beautiful young model. The old brownstone apartment she simply had to have. The grotesque blind priest who watched down on her day and night from and upper-storey window. A pair of perverted creatures who wanted her to join their circle. The mad little old man who gave her tea and sympathy. The cool, calculating lover who first mocked her fears.'

COMMENT: Another successful Hell vs. Heaven novel. It owes a great deal to ROSEMARY'S BABY. There is a strong element of the Gothic formula in these young-woman-victim stories. I suppose I'll see the currently released movie based on this book when it hits the \$1. theaters or TV.

Since we've lost faith in government, I suppose we seek faith in a real God and Devil, and in the endless war between Good and Evil. That explains the basic appeal, and I find a cynical amusement that this Need should be exploited--so extravagantly profited from--by people who don't believe in anything but money and power and manipulation. Still ---they are giving the people what the people want/need.

STAR TREK LOG NINE

By Alan Dean Foster
Ballantine 25557, \$1.50

"Bem" is the episode title. It is adapted from a script by David Gerrold. Written in a good, clear fiction style consistent with the TV series.

THE MAKING OF KING KONG

By Orville Goldner and George E. Turner.
Ballantine 25826, \$4.95.

Originally published by A.S. Barnes & Co. in 1975. This edition is in the 8 1/4 x 10 3/4 softcover format. Full of fascinating detail about the filming of the first KING KONG movie, over 160 photographs and illustrations. All kinds of how-it-was-done information. If your thing is old movies, this is a must-have book.

2-14-77 There's a fascinating story in the paper today. Seems then-CIA Director Richard Helms lied to a Senate committee which was investigating CIA, ITT and Nixon involvement in the overthrow of the Allende government in Chile.

Helms is now under the gun of imminent indictment on federal perjury charges.

He has warned the CIA 'and others' that if he is indicted he will name former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger as the man who ordered him to lie.

There is pressure on to drop the Helms indictment.

What is fascinating is the power Henry Kissinger had. He ordered the Director of the CIA to lie to a Committee of the United States Senate!

Who else did he order around?

Where did he get that kind of overwhelming power? Circumstantial evidence tells me it came from someone other than Nixon, because Henry Kissinger was openly contemptuous of Nixon...called him stupid and other unflattering things.

Who was Kissinger's patron? Who placed him in high government position? Who gifted him with huge sums of money? Who invited him to join the Council on Foreign Relations? (Who made sure a captive publishing company would pay him 2 million dollars for his memoirs--a nice further payoff for a lifetime of service.) I think it was the Rockefeller power locus.

As an aside, something happened during the Senate investigation into Watergate that I never forgot: a witness testified that on the night that Nixon received a critical phone call from John Mitchell (on the one phone in the White House, apparently, that wasn't bugged), Nixon immediately made several urgent calls after receiving the Mitchell call. Nixon called Nelson Rockefeller.

Why? At that time Nelson Rockefeller was his 'bitter' Republican enemy--at least he was supposed to be.

Wouldn't you think Sam Dash or any of the other staff questioners would have asked these questions of the witness, or followed up on that intriguing lead? Don't you think at least one of the distinguished, fearless Senators would have delved into that? Why did Nixon immediately call Rockefeller on that fateful night?

Nobody said boo about it. Not a word was spoken. It was never mentioned, ever, again. And, what I consider even more revealing, the fearless press said not a word about it, either. AP, UPI, NBC, CBS, ABC...all were silent.

Every other lead was pursued unto death, but not that one.

That significant silence (and others, since) convinced me of the Rockefeller power in this country. They rule. And you can bet your bottom devalued nickel that major government policies are dictated by their interests and policies. And are carried out by their agents in government.

Research Communications Network sent me their Newsletter #2. They are advocates of and believers in Catastrophist history. They believe large-scale catastrophes have occurred in Earth's history, that some of these disasters have occurred in the time of Man, and that the existing 'uniformitarian dogma' existing in History, Chemistry, Geology, etc. will have to be shattered before the truth can establish itself.

And, indeed, there is an 'underground' in the sciences which is tempted by the accumulating evidence that Earth and Man have not developed and changed very gradually over the eons and millenia.

There is, in this issue, a Break-through Report on the work of Robert V. Gentry, a professor of physics at Columbia Union College in Maryland, whose work with radioholes in old rock indicates that current radioactive-decay dating methods may be radically wrong.

Network is currently funded by contributions. They'd like \$10. a year, or have you buy a few books (notably the ones by Velikovsky), or your offer of active help. But I'm fairly sure a contribution of \$1. and a request for the latest Newsletter would be honored.

Send to: NETWORK, P.O. Box 414, Portland, OR 97207.

Good news. Marion Zimmer Bradley has agreed to the publication of her long article, "An Evolution of Consciousness" in SFR. She will be doing some rewriting, adding afterthoughts, etc. for its SFR appearance. That will be the August issue.

Also, Bob Silverberg has agreed to the publication of his six Ace Introductions in SFR, in the November issue. They will be under the title, "My Early Days in Science Fiction." They're goldmines of inside information, the state of the art in the 50s, and the state of Bob Silverberg.

MONOLOG CONTINUED ON PAGE 40

'DEAR POETRY EDITOR:

MY STUDENTS AND I WOULD LIKE TO ENLIST YOUR COOPERATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT CONCERNING "POETRY THERAPY," AS YOU MAY ALREADY KNOW....

HOW TO KILL A BOOK (WITH A COMMENTARY BY THE MURDERER)

BY DAVID STEVER

This might interest your readers to the point of it being a short article on the power for good or evil of the people who design books for the publishers of this world.

What has set me off is the review in SFR 19 by one Ronald R. Lambert, of the novel THE HAN THEORY by Allen W. Eckert. You might remember Allen Eckert. His article of some fifteen years ago, which invented the Bermuda Triangle (Remember the story of the lost flight of naval patrol planes, just after WWII? The rescue ship that never came back, either? Eckert invented from thin air the stories of confused radio messages from the fliers to base. Other writers picked this up as gospel, and the rest is pseudo-history.), and his historical novels, and a novel that Disney filmed a few years back. Well, a few months ago, almost two years now, he turned in an SF manuscript to the editors of Little, Brown, and it was assumed that if they didn't buy it, that it would be a cold day in any month before they saw one of his good-selling historicals. The notion behind the plot is that the ice builds thicker at the South Pole than the North, since there is land under the South Pole, which more or less snags it. This buildup, when combined with the wobble of the Earth in it's orbit, will cause the planet to change it's axis of rotation from time to time, says the book. The ancient astronauts are but earlier native civilizations, y'see. Rocky and Bullwinkle fans will remember this plot, which was used on that show in the early 1960's, unchanged.

For two years, I lived with a book designer working for Little, Brown, and I listened to her unending complaints of stupid company bureaucrats and brainless authors, all of whom she has to deal with. My amazement that LB was going to buy this obvious turkey was not matched by her; she knew what they were capable of. When this purchase was followed by Peter Dickinson's THE BLUE HAWK, and a Terry Carr anthology, THE IDES OF TOMORROW, it was decided for them that they must be educated as to the distinction between SF and SciFi. A local fan, reknown for his

bibliographic work, was brought in by my friend, and he worked with the editor who was doing the Carr. Within the manufacturing department, strings were pulled, and my friend ended up with all three books assigned to her for design. Plans were laid, and they were executed.

Note the layout of the Eckert. Look at the tiny typeface, forced when the company decreed that the book had to fit a size too small for a book that big. See how the paper glares at you when you stare at the tiny print; it's starkness makes the book seem oh so very barren, and harder to read than a darker paper would have. Note the display typeface which is used for the title, chapter headings, etc. It's one of the so-called computer faces, a little hard to read; a face that rages at you, "Ugly! Ugly!". Take off the jacket of the book, and look at the title on the spine. See the way that the title is stamped slightly crooked? The people who did the job did it badly, but it fits with this book.

The jacket is done by committee at Little, Brown, and it shows with this book. The manufacturing department has nothing to do with it, and the art department can, at best, make suggestions, that will be ignored. The jacket committee, made up of high-ranking people in the company with no graphic arts training, rejected some ten sketches for this book, and set the production schedule back, because they couldn't make up their minds. Phone calls were made by these people asking why the book wasn't ready. The manufacturing department sweetly told them the reason, and they stopped calling. They finally made up their minds. The jacket shows ten shots of a Rand McNally type globe, spinning, and the globe is fading out, during the course of the shots. In ugly type-writer face, the title and author's name appears, and the blurb "Has the earth been destroyed before -- eons ago -- and is it about to be destroyed again in a global cataclysm".

This was done not by a designer, trying to sabotage the book's sales, but by the heads of the company. The designer's name does not appear on the copyright page -- the head of

her department wouldn't let her use Cordwainer Bird, so she left it blank instead. The book has done very poorly in terms of sales, and the author thinks the design job was beautiful.

But based on this one book, let us not conclude that the designer is out to destroy every book that they get their dirty little hands on. Far from it; let us look at the Dickinson novel, *THE BLUE HAWK*. This excellent novel was enhanced by the truly beautiful job that this same person did, and it took just as much time, no more, maybe even less, to achieve.

In *THE BLUE HAWK* we find an elegant typeface that is large, and open. Combined with a creamy colored paper stock, it makes the book very easy to read. The display face is similar to the text face, and the simplicity of the title page adds to the overall of the book, relaxed, and 'wanting' to be read. The cover of the book is also quiet but bold, and could even be called tastefully elegant, as it was in the office. The art department found a real gem of an artist, named Gerry Hoover, and the complexity of the pencil drawing he did for the jacket, a simple medium, in stark color, complements the simplicity of the book within. How it got by the jacket is a complete mystery, to this very day.

If you search out these books at either bookstore or library, please look carefully at the way that the books strike you, and realize that the designer has helped you shape that opinion of the book, even without your reading a single line of the story within.

COMMENTARY BY KRISSY

I, Krissy, do freely and willingly admit to murder of *THE HAB THEORY* by Allan W. Eckart. I consider it a mercy killing. First, you must realize that designers frequently pass aesthetic judgments on their books; hell, by the time you've been through the manuscript three times, you know what it says, even if after the first time you turned it upside down so you wouldn't have to.

THE HAB THEORY. Sigh. My name isn't on it, I'm too ashamed of the content. I am not ashamed of the design. The book looks unappealing; I tried very hard to make it that way. It was a bad book, honest it was. I'm a patient person, really I am, and I realize that many white authors have real trouble describing black characters. I understand. We don't have ringlets or glossy locks or delicate curls or anything like that, but we don't all shake our 'wooly heads', honest we don't -- but I digress.

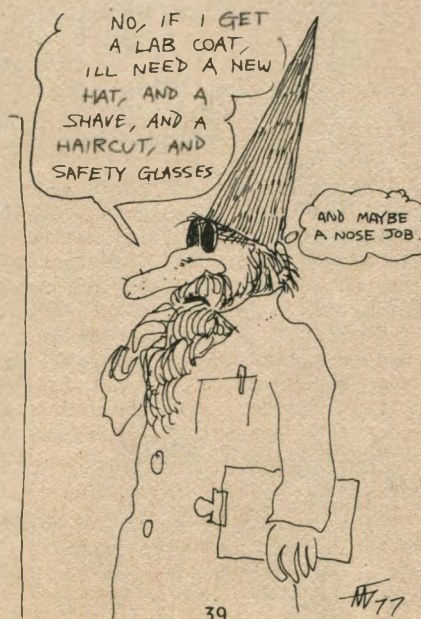
You know what did it? What determined me to destroy this book? It was the bullet. I don't know from guns too well, but you don't put magnum anything into a .38 caliber pistol. No, good way to see eternity quick. There wasn't a lot of space

(management decrees size in advance), hardly any, so the book had to be crammed. That means small type, and no running heads, which means that the book looks like a text book. I tried to break it up by putting brackets around the page numbers, but Com Com//the type setter for the book//only had mathematical brackets (I tried!). The display face -- Moore Computer Black, is admittedly hideous, but Com Com and I adore continuity. Besides, Orbit Outline was much too awful.

David Stever mentions that the spine is stamped crookedly. It's not all their fault, although with that particular printer, it's a good idea to make your dies crooked in the hope that they'll come out all right. It almost always works. As to the jacket, I absolve myself. The Jacket Committee is made up of high-ranking management personnel. It is to prove to us (production) that management has artistic sensibilities. They also pick titles.

Shortly after *THE HAB THEORY* came out, *TIME MAGAZINE* noted in its obituary column the passing of a 'scientist', whose name we forget, but whose initials are H.A.B. Yes, he was most noted for a theory about how the earth might tip over because of the ice at the South Pole. Nobody took him seriously. That's the real world for you.

//Time-Life, Inc. owns Little, Brown and Company.//



2-15-77 As I expected, NBC news did not mention the Helms-Kissinger story. It was not considered time-worthy, although various 'human interest' segments did get on.

NBC News is of course correct in its assertion that its program content is not interfered with by network or sponsors. It isn't necessary; news editors and writers and reporters are not hired unless they are known to be 'reliable'. News people who violate certain unwritten 'laws' are not promoted, are reassigned, are terminated. That's how it works in the Big Media, and an ambitious young newspaper soon tumbles to the rules of the game...or doesn't go anywhere.

Thanks to Todd Klein for a lot of info on the new copyright law.

#The time limit for copyright ownership is now the creator's lifetime plus 50 years.

#Automatic copyright exists from the moment of creation. But infringement suites may not be brought and damages and attorney's fees will not be awarded by the courts unless a work is registered with the Register of Copyrights. Sending two copies of your work to the Library of Congress brings 'fixation', but a legal assignment of copyright only comes with registration---filling out the form and paying the new \$10 dollars fee, effective date: Jan.1, 1978.

'There is no question about who will be the first owner of statutory copyright in every case; the statute states explicitly and without qualification that "copyright in a work protected under this title vests initially in the author or authors of the work." Moreover, although many authors will probably not choose to bother with it, there will no longer be anything to prevent authors from making copyright registration for their unpublished works in their own names. The Copyright Office expects an influx of unpublished material it cannot now accept for registration: manuscripts of poems, articles, stories, novels, reports, monographs, advertising copy and what have you. It is not entirely unlikely that, sooner or later, having a certificate of copyright registration will be just as important to the bargaining position of authors of unpublished non-dramatic literary works as it is now to that of the composers and lyricists of unpublished musical compositions.'

"Finding Your Way Around in the New Copyright Law"
By Barbara Ringer, U.S. Register of Copyrights.

I suppose this will require a different phrasing for my assignment of rights on the contents page.

BOOK RECEIVED

THE ANNOTATED DRACULA

Dracula by Bram Stoker
With an Introduction, Notes, and
Bibliography by Leonard Wolf.
Art by Satty.

Ballantine 25130, \$5.95

In the large 8-1/4 x 10-3/4 softcover size, 362 pages. It has hundreds of annotations that run side-by-side with the text. Full of photos, engravings, drawings, cuts... Eight pages of detailed maps tracing Dracula's progress through Transylvania, England, Whitby, London... Lists of films. A bibliography and an index, and more. Exhaustive. Compleat.

2-18-77 It is to weep and laugh. Those idiots in Washington, DC... I speak of the Congress, this time. Rep. Al Ullman (of Oregon!) is head of the committee which is gently tinkering with Carter's tax-stimulus package. The committee is now taking the mask off and showing us that the 'tax rebate' plan is a crock; it is an income redistribution scheme---\$50 to everybody except those who earned \$30,000 or more in 1976. \$50 to all welfare recipients---those who didn't earn dime one in 1976.

If I were a derelict who hadn't filed a tax report for lack of income or lack of interest, I would do so now. A late report showing zero income and zero tax will nevertheless put you in the computers and bring you a \$50 check in due course.

The 'tax rebate' business is a fraud in another sense, because all this 'rebate' money is sheer debt--all printing press money that was never earned and never collected.

The rationale for denying the "rebate" to the "rich people" is that they don't need it. And, at the same time, there is moaning that the poor people who get it will only use it to pay bills! The free money is supposed to be used instantly to buy new things so the stores will have to order more new things and so the factories will have to hire more people to make the new things ordered.

But it is the rich or semi-rich who will be most likely to spend the \$50 on new things, instantly. They don't need it to pay past-due heating bills. Nevermind, we are caught in the politics of envy and scapegoats.

Of course, the Congressmen won't themselves get a \$50 rebate---they don't need it, because they have arranged for a \$13,000.00 per year in-

crease in salary for themselves, now in effect. Which brings them up to about \$60,000.00 per year. That is \$5,000.00 per month. \$1250.00 per week. \$250.00 per working day (not counting the long weekends and long recesses). Somehow, I don't think my Congressman is worth that kind of money. Is yours? They do manage to take care of themselves, don't they---with your money.

The desperate process of keeping the international financial crisis from reaching another disaster-point continues. More weak loans to underdeveloped countries, more fragile loans to East European countries. More selling off of its gold to finance these loans by the IMF, and more 'renegotiating' of past-due loans by increasingly desperate multinational banks.

It is all going to start unraveling one of these days. The debt structure grows and grows, and only ever more severe inflation of the money supplies of the world keeps it upright. (Read that 'ever more severe degrading of the value of money and looting of savings' for a real picture of what is going on.)

I advise you again to buy things that will last with your money. Do not save. The price increases coming will appall everyone and will bring controls over everything and everyone.

Well, enough of that for a while.

BOOKS RECEIVED

AFTERMATH

By Karl Fulves
Citation Books, \$2.95
Box 188,
Hawthorne, NJ 07506

I read the first page or two and got myself wired in. This is a very compelling novel about an invasion of Earth in the near future by aliens from Rigel. They adopt the form and strategy of German, blue-eyed Aryans who try to recreate the Second World War. Terrible, advanced weapons are used on both sides.

The writing is realistic and good. The story is told in a series of short stories involving different sets of characters and different aspects of the war as it begins, progresses and ends.

Fulves has a Message, but at least he has it buried in a hell of a gripping story.

THE EARTH AGAIN REDEEMED

By Martin Green
Basic Books, \$9.95

'This is the story of two parallel worlds that come into communication across a great, mysterious gap of time and space. One of these

worlds is a dark and brooding 17th Century Africa; the other is a barren moonscape of post-nuclear-holocaust Massachusetts. In the respective dramas being played out within these worlds, and between them, the central moral and cultural arguments of our age are given enormous force and take on a thrilling tension of their own.'

COMMENT: Martin thinks people living inside buildings are safe from killing radioactively surrounding ground; all they have to do is stay inside and wait....

After that clunker on page 15 I lost interest. Good idea for a novel, though, and the super-cyborg human tempted me.

You might want to try it if it reaches paperback.

NEBULA AWARD STORIES ELEVEN

Edited by Ursula K. LeGuin
Harper & Row, \$8.95

Introduction by Ursula K. LeGuin.

"Catch That Zeppelin!" by Fritz Leiber.

"End Game" by Joe Haldeman

"1975: The Year in Science Fiction, or Let's Hear It for the Decline and Fall of the Science Fiction Empire!" by Peter Nicholls.

"Home is the Hangman" by Roger Zelazny.

"Child of All Ages" by P.J.

Plauser.

"Potential and Actuality in Science Fiction" by Vonda McIntyre.

"Shatterday" by Harlan Ellison.

"San Diego Lightfood Sue" by Tom Reamy.

"Time Deer" by Craig Strete.

Nebula Awards, 1975: Win, Place, and Show.

((# indicates the winner.))

COMMENT: A solid lineup of stories. The Introduction and the articles by Nicholls and McIntyre as usual beat the dead horse of "old-fashioned" sf.

2-20-77 I have a horde of letters and parts of letters to quote/print, so let's get to it.

First there's a spear thrust into my vitals from MIKE GLICKSOHN:

'Manythanks for SFR 20 with its Fabian wet-dream inducing cover and interesting interview with my friend Joe Haldeman, who I suspect is engaging just a little bit in image-building when describing his work patterns. The many times I've syaied with Joe he's rarely up before four, and brews goldd old Joe Di-maggio Mister Coffee to see him through the next few hours. Still, a little machismo is good for the soul

'While SFR is not a fannish magazine and Linda ((Bushyager)) outlines the FAAN awards as thoroughly as most of your readers will be interested in, I really must protest your rather blatant whitewashing of the whole concept of the whole concept of the awards. I know I'm not thrilled at being called a "jealous spoil sport" with no talent and no dedication to the field and I somehow doubt that people like Bowers and Warner and Pelz will recognize themselves in that description. Nor do I think the Hugo voters are morons who don't know a good magazine when they see one: I do believe, however, that they are uninformed as to the variety of material published in fanzines, and hence their votes are based on an inadequate knowledge of the category they are voting in. I too took Sandra to task for her description of you in SWOON but I also happen to believe there are a lot of people working in fanzines who are far better writers than Dick Geis. So it goes.'

Ohhh... I suppose there are better reviewers...and better commentators...and some with more "personality", but all better in one person? Gad, the thought shatters me.

But to be serious for a moment, I know there are a lot of writers, some of the people who write for and to SFR, who can write rings around me and who would edit a fantastic fan magazine...but they are not so inclined to do and endure all that an SFR requires; they don't have the fire in the guts. The warp, and the woof, if you will.

I have been a fan since the early Fifties. I have seen fans spark, flare up, burn out, and fade away. I have seen Sixth Fandom, Seventh Fandom, Eighth Fandom come and go. For me fandom and science fiction are a way-of-life. And I resent it very much when a few relative new fans hook a thumb at me and tell me "Geis, you don't qualify anymore; you're out!"



How long will you last, Mike?

Now, onward to a section on this matter from MIKE GLYER:

'I see that you've received the latest directive from world amateurism headquarters by Linda Bushyager. I read that kind of thing and want to cry out, "Stop helping me already!" All that legalism, logic-chopping and statistic-slinging starts from a fallacious assumption

near as I can tell. The Fanzine Hugo is no longer called the Best Amateur Publication Hugo. It is called, in the parlance of MAC, the Fanzine Hugo. And the WSFS constitution under which that Worldcon operated does not specify Hugo categories: those are left to the individual worldcon's discretion.

'There is no doubt in my mind that SFR, LOCUS and ALGOL are fanzines, so I find this a solution I can abide by: it recognizes the situation as it exists, makes no category definitions to default on (the Amateur standard was never enforced), and leaves the award wide open to whoever can get enough votes to win it.

'Of course you are overlooking the basic reason that there aren't more fanzines like SFR, ALGOL and LOCUS. First, not many people want to publish such a fanzine. Second, those who would love to publish such a fanzine, some of whom are already getting material that that would make such a fanzine (like Mike Bracken and Mike McGarry) don't have the several thousand dollars per year to prime the pump. That is, even if you expect to sell out your print run, you've still got to have over a thousand bucks to produce something like ALGOL, and at least several hundred dollars to do just one issue of LOCUS or SFR. If a fan can't afford the venture capital, that's all there is to it.'

No, you overlook the fact that Andy Porter, the Browns and I have been slowly building our magazines for years. Five or ten years. During that time we learned, developed, and saw others invest huge sums into offset presses, color printing, fancy graphics...and fade away. I say again if a fan has the talent and is willing to put in the time and do the work, he/she can compete at what might be called 'world class' fanzine level. I sacrificed a lot of money and energy and time to make SFR what it is today. And I'm a very competitive person in certain ways. To those who want a Hugo but don't want to do the necessary work...tough shit. Put up or shut up.

LETTER FROM CAL JOHNSON

January 20, 1977

'Now to the really nitty-gritty part of my letter, where I pose that age-old question, "Does anybody really give a damn?"

'I relate it this time to all you good ol' people out there practicing FIAWOL. Do you really care about people like me, a neophan, or fringe-fan? Weren't you like me sometimes before? Somewhere way

back there? Will you help me get started? (Our kind opinionated editor has been very kind to me in this respect?) Will you accept me at your regional-cons (when and if I can find them.)

'Sure, I like STAR TREK, and I like some of the Gene Roddenberry pilots, too. But that doesn't mean that I am a Trekkie. I would really like to get into fandom.

'Where do you do it?

'Whom do you contact?

'Those questions may really sound stupid, but I am serious about them. Obviously, I went to a good place when I wrote to Dick Geis. But will all of you good folks be tolerant of the young boy who asks the dumb questions at the con? Don't treat him like shit, he wants to be one of you, but doesn't quite know how to go about it.

'He hasn't read all of the good books, perhaps, but maybe he hasn't been able to get hold of them. He can't spend a whole lot of dough, and cannot get around to too many cities. He hasn't gotten drunk, stoned or laid yet (I don't give a damn about pot and a chunk of ass can wait a while) but that is the way of the world.

'What this really is, you see, is a cry for help.

'Will you maybe correspond with me? Will any fan organizations in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area get in touch with me? When are your cons? Where is something in DALLAS or FT. WORTH that I can get to?

'Please, somebody tell me!!!!!!

'Before I resign myself to the paperbacks that I can get off Woolworth's 25¢ rack.

'I hope to hear from somebody!

'Cal Johnson, 803 N. 37th, Corsicana, TX 75110'

A letter now on the subject of oil...from RONALD M. SALOMON:

'Where I work I share space with a sister/affiliated company which sells oil. We/they were told last October by the distributor who supplies the oil that there was a "plan" to increase the cost of oil every week until Xmas. And they kept their word---still do to a degree. Nearly every Friday for the months of Nov. and Dec. a phone call said "Up 500 points" at midnight (one-half a penny), so nearly every other week retail was upped a cent. This season began at 40.9¢ per gallon; for the last 2-3 weeks we've "held" at 47.9¢ which must mean roughly 14 increases the last 14 or

so weeks?! The price increase is passed on to the consumer match, and the markup to the oil dealer is the same as it was half a dozen years ago, about 8¢---that's the gross profit they say (no %age work here) and they also say they lose \$ on servicing at \$38-42 a year contract price but do it for "competitive" reasons. (6-7 years ago "expensive" oil was 16.9¢ or 17.5¢ and the contract for service for the year was \$25.) And they fill up the truck's tanks at the end of every day regardless of weather---they can't buy cold and sell warm. And they do buy/sell per gallon, not weight. The oil people here say who buys in June?

'All the above info is what I hear as office-talk, you understand, but I consider it reliable/accurate/true. And we/they wait till we know all the competition's already gone up (again) to push up ye oil retail.'

Thanks. Another proof of corporate administered prices.

By the way, the winter oil I had put into my tank in January is "shrinking" as did the June oil... so I have come to the conclusion that my dipstick is not properly calibrated to the tank---thereby giving misleading readings at the top levels...perhaps all the way down.

I note that I failed to type the dates on the letters above. The Mike Glicksohn postcard is postmarked Feb. 16, the Glycer letter is dated January 28, and the Salomon is dated Feb. 15th. All, of course, 1977.

I have a voice in defense of Barry Malzberg's writing. It is an academic voice, but... Anyway, here is A LETTER FROM KEITH FERRELL:

12 Feb. 1977

'I have been watching for some years and with some amusement the controversy that has grown up around the works of Barry Malzberg, just as, for some years and with much amazement I have been reading those works. For two years, in fact, I taught at the Residential College of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and while there I used several of Malzberg's books in my courses. Specifically, I taught HEROVIT'S WORLD, THE FALLING ASTRONAUTS, and BEYOND APOLLO. Having followed his career so closely it does not surprise me that Malzberg has become a figure pilloried by fandom. This, after all, is the way sf's best writers are always treated.'

((Of course, like LeGuin, Lafferty, Sturgeon, Bradbury, Lovecraft, Dick, Vance, Herbert, Ellison...))

'Since, although the experience is three years removed, I was a member of the literary/academic nexus that so many of your correspondents decry so loudly, my opinions in this matter may be ignored out of hand, but let me offer them nonetheless. Ten years to the month after the sale of Malzberg's first sf story, I have reached the conclusion that not only is Barry Malzberg a worthwhile, exciting writer, he is also (and I say this without hyperbole) the finest writer ever to grace this genre. His body of work is simply unequalled for sustenance of vision, heart-breaking clarity of prose, rigorous treatments of his themes. Of course he is loathed! How could it be any other way?'

((I submit it is Barry's style which puts off so many readers, and his downer themes. It is how he says his messages that drives people up the wall, not so much the content or the challenge.

((Let us just say that it is Barry's individual fictional way with words which, to my mind, makes him a fictional drag so much of the time---excellent as his ideas and perceptions may be, giving him the benefit of my doubt.))

'At the risk of sounding simplistic, let me explain what I am certain everyone knows already: the reasons for the detestation of Barry Malzberg. Sf readers have never been particularly open to writers who offered them a challenge. Books like BAREFOOT IN THE HEAD (which I also taught), much of James Blish's work, ROGUE MOON, and many others, have always been greeted with loud cries of "Whatever happened to Doc Smith?" or (lately) "What would John Campbell say?"'

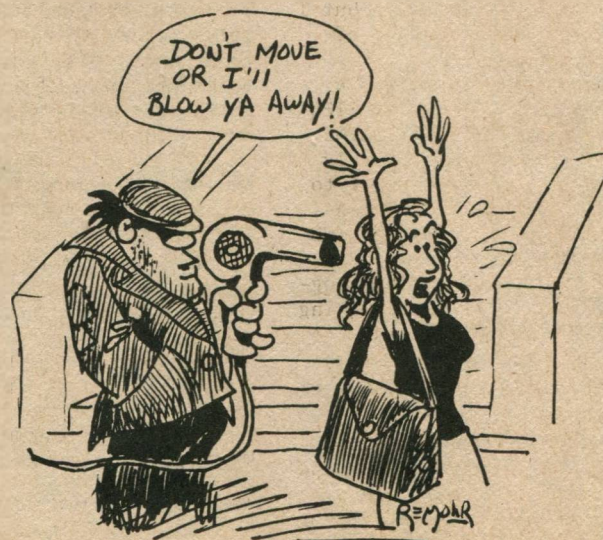
((For what it's worth, I have been Barry's most bitter and continuous critic, and I loved BAREFOOT

IN THE HEAD, ROGUE MOON, Jim Blish's work, and find Doc Smith unreadable, and could care less what John Campbell might think.))

'Well, Doc Smith is fine, gents, and so are Heinlein and Eric Frank Russell, but they are none of them artists fit to sharpen Barry Malzberg's pencils. What has made Malzberg's work more prone to attack than earlier literary writers of sf is that Malzberg, like any serious writer, has carried that work one step farther. Inside sf Malzberg never relinquished his integrity, his ability to create on paper some sort of archetype which bore him and his characters like currents on a wire to the hearts of the problems and fears we, each of us, must face every day, and will no doubt face thousands of years from now. Writers like Malzberg are never loved; they ask too much of us, they offer us too much pain and anger. Pain which Kimball Kinnison or Captain Kirk would never understand and would rather flee, burying their heads beneath alien sands. So, too, it seems, would people like Darrell Schweitzer rather flee than confront the demons which dwell within him (and all of us) that Malzberg elucidated with such agonizing clarity.

((I'm an advocate of the carrot on a stick approach: if a writer wants a reader to wade through a book full of pain and anger, ambiguity and repetitiveness, he'd better give that reader a nibble of "entertainment" throughout. Calling readers lazy and escapist and literary cretins because they don't want to give attention and emotion (and money) without getting something in return is unrealistic, cheap-shot elitism and a form of cheating.))

'Also, I would remind Mr. Schweitzer that before he attacks a writer



on the grounds of his public persona, it might be wise to study the public lives of other writers. William Faulkner used to employ interviews as vehicles for sending forth statements so absurd as to be pitiable, but that does not cheapen the glory of ABSALOM, ABSALOM! Norman Mailer has made a career out of bufoonery; he remains our greatest living writer. And we all know what Dr. Johnson said about writing for money.

'I hope from the depths of my soul that Barry Malzberg will continue to write fiction. He is too good to waste his talent in some other line of work. But Malzberg really needs no defense from me. He's got four million words of fiction to speak for him. And it will not be silenced.'

A postcard from JON GUSTAFSON:

Feb. 16, 1977

'Could you add a correction in the next SFR about the (#5) Art Issue of NEW VENTURE? The price is \$2. all right, but if your readers order just #5 there is a 50¢ postage and envelope charge on top of it. If they send a subscription of \$4. the charge is included, but we're losing too much money on #5 if they don't add that 50¢.'

I cannot resist printing a suggestion from DAINIS BISENIEKS:

Feb. 16, 1977

'For Philip Jose Farmer's third Opar novel, I suggest OPAR THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY. How about a "fact" book to explain it all? THE OPAR MAN CULTURE?'

Here is a serious drug warning from VICTORIA WAYNE:

February 14, 1977

'I have my own drug horror story to tell. I was fortunate, though... I think. My mind wasn't permanently damaged, as far as I can tell, but I did lose much of the potential of four years of my life.

'In my case, the poison was a "major tranquilizer" known as STELAZINE, or commonly, TRIFLUOPERAZINE. Member of the phenothiazine family of tranquilizers, it is similar to CHLORPROMAZINE (brand names THORAZINE or LARGACTIL) and PERPHENAZINE (I don't know the brand names), in chemical structure and in physiological action. ... I read everything on STELAZINE I could find---but the main things it does were not mentioned in any books.

'STELAZINE is indicated for psychotic disorders, although it is also used as an anti-anxiety agent and as an anti-emetic. Dosages range from 2 to 40 mg per day (similar for PERPHENAZINE, ten times as much

weight of CHLORPROMAZINE approximately is required for the same effect), depending on the severity of the disorder.

'In 1972 I went to a doctor complaining of a general depression that clung tenaciously, occasionally growing really black. At first I balked at the idea of using drugs to correct a simple case of neurotic depression and various worried and anxious feelings that I had then; but toward the end of the year I decided to give them a try, since no improvement seemed to be forthcoming any other way. I went on a 4 mg daily dose of Stelazine, 2 mg morning and evening, and in pretty short order noticed that no longer was I going through those black depressions.

'Four years later, I was still on the 4 mg dose, a period that included one unsuccessful month of trying to cut down to 2 mg per day, a failure because of the depressed feelings and bad anxiety that seemed to result.'

((By mid December of 1976 Victoria was down to one dose every 5 days...and in mid-December, she stopped.))

'I've been off Stealazine for two months now, and nothing on earth could induce me to go back. What this tranquillizer does to the mind amounts to a temporary lobotomy. It decreases the intelligence, the mental awareness, the ability to reason, the judgement, by an amount far in excess of the minimal noticeable.

'Pretty well the only precaution given, though, is not to operate heavy machinery or drive when initially starting therapy. Nothing about its effect on the mind. I know, though; I've been there. Going off Stelazine gave me feelings equivalent to taking some sort of miracle pill that suddenly made me smarter. And one doesn't notice the deterioration of mental faculties upon going on such a drug because one of the things that goes is the ability to detect and judge such changes. Fortunately, with this drug, the effect seems to be reversible and leaves no permanent impairment. I hope.

'A lot of science fiction has dealt with a wonder drug used by a repressive tyrant to keep the people docile and loyal. And Stelazine is one drug which, in dosages as small as 4 mg per day, could do it.'

Thanks for the warning, Victoria. If it helps one person in the readership your recounting is invaluable. I imagine it took some courage to write about it.

BOOKS RECEIVED

THE PANCHRONICON PLOT

By Ron Goulart

DAW UY1283, \$1.25

It is a mark of success, and I hope big income, when a writer's name on the cover is larger than the title. This is one of them.

Ron Goulart's latest, another swift-paced, scalpel-clean (with blood) mockery of man's foibles via a set of preposterous people and events--this time Jake Conger of the Wild Talent Division unravels a conspiracy in time because the President of the U.S.A. has gone bonkers and seems to be shipping political enemies off into the past. Way back.

Ron will keep you grinning as the pages fly past.

ATLANTIS---THE NEW EVIDENCE

By Martin Ebon

Signet W7371, \$1.50

A reprise of the extant Atlantis theories/locations with new evidence and speculation that the legend started when Santorini, an island in the Aegean Sea in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, was devastated by a volcanic eruption... Interesting but deflating of hopes for a super civilization in the Atlantic.

SCIENCE FICTION AT LARGE

Edited by Peter Nicholls

Harper & Row, \$7.95

'A collection of essays, by various hands, about the interface between science fiction and reality.'

Introduction by Peter Nicholls.

"Science Fiction and Mrs. Brown"

By Ursula K. LeGuin.

"Lateral Thinking and Science Fiction" by Edward De Bono.

"Scientific Thought in Fiction and in Fact" by John Taylor.

"Science Fiction and the Larger Lunacy" by John Brunner.

"Worlds Beside Worlds" by Harry Harrison.

"Science Fiction and Change" by Alvin Toffler.

"Inner Time" by Alan Garner.

"The Embarrassments of Science Fiction" by Thomas M. Disch.

"Science Fiction: The Monsters and the Critics" by Peter Nicholls.

"The Search for the Marvellous" by Robert Sheckley.

"Man, Android and Machine" by Philip K. Dick.

COMMENT: I tend to avoid reading books about science fiction, not to avoid polluting my precious sf bodily fluids, but because they are a drag after a while.

In his introduction, Peter Nicholls finishes with: "Here is science fiction, released from its cage, prowling the world at large." With

both eyes agog with wonder, marveling at its every step, so self-conscious and vain and self-critical it is in danger of forgetting why it is prowling. And with its fur full of academic fleas.

BUT, every serious fan and reader should read a few of these, and this is a good one of its type.

TURNING POINTS---Essays On The Art Of Science Fiction

Edited by Damon Knight

Harper & Row, \$12.50

Introduction by Damon Knight.

"Science Fiction: Its Nature, Faults and Virtues" by Robert A. Heinlein.

"Social Science Fiction" by Isaac Asimov.

"What is Science Fiction?" by Damon Knight.

"Pilgrim Fathers: Lucian and All That" by Brian W. Aldiss.

"Science Fiction Before Gernsback" by H. Bruce Franklin.

"The Situation Today" by Kingsley Amis.

"On Science Fiction" by C.S. Lewis.

"Alien Monsters" by Joanna Russ.

"Cathedrals in Space" by William Atheling, Jr. (James Blish).

"Contact" by Pierre Versins.

"No Copying Allowed" by John W. Campbell.

"Scientists in SF: A Debate" by Philip R. Geffe, Milton A. Rothman, John W. Campbell, James V. McConnell.

"On the Writing of Speculative Fiction" by Robert A. Heinlein.

"How To Build A Planet" by Poul Anderson.

"How To Collaborate Without Getting Your Head Shaved" by Keith Laumer.

"Writing and Selling Science Fiction" by Damon Knight.

"Chemical Persuasion" by Aldous Huxley.

"Pandora's Box" by Robert A. Heinlein.

"Gourmet Dining in Outer Space" by Alred Bester.

"Why So Much Syzygy?" by Theodore Sturgeon.

"There's Nothing Like a Good Foundation" by Theodore Sturgeon.

"Son of Dr. Strangelove" by Arthur C. Clarke.

"Journey With a Little Man" by Richard McKenna.

Notes by Damon Knight.

COMMENT: Same as above, except this one costs a good deal more.

States steel companies to buy Rhodesian tungsten ore. The white Rhodesian government is of course the most horrid of horrors. None of these senators, of course, see anything wrong with United States banks lending billions upon billions of dollars to East European communist governments, to Russia... Nor do these blinkered hypocrites see anything wrong with U.S. corporations doing all kinds of business with these same communist states. It is now only 'racist' (white 'racist') governments which are to be legislated against.

I ask myself why this very selective morality and outrage, and I don't come up with any answer that doesn't seem extravagantly paranoid.

This same double-think, double-morality is evident in the words of our new full-of-rectitude President who sees nothing wrong with the CIA bribing foreign leaders to give them a free hand in their countries, while condemning U.S. corporations for bribing foreign officials in order to sell their goods in those countries.

Will you look at how much money Carter is saving us? He has taken away limousines from high govt. officials, sent away a lot of TV sets from the white house, and asked his cabinet heads to write a report telling him how they can cut down the number of reports they in turn require from the businessmen of the country.

Uhhh, but then he did increase the 1978 budget---was it 15 billion dollars? And the deficit an equal amount to about 69 billions.... We aren't supposed to notice that, I guess.

Highly publishable letters keep coming in. Here's one from CRAIG W. ANDERSON:

'SF doesn't always predict what's going to happen, but on occasion....

In his review of TIME OF THE FOURTH HORSEMAN, George R. R. Martin notes:

"One can, of course, quibble with the basic premise of the book; a government ruthless enough to conduct this sort of experiment...."

'Well, our very own Army biological warfare division, it was recently revealed, released active bacteria over numerous American cities for a period of 16 years in order to test the "dispersion" effects. Three known deaths resulted from this little program.

'Just thought you'd want to know. We are living in perilous times, indeed.'

Yeah. Thanks. How does that song go that Helen Reddy sings: "Leave me alone, please leave me alone, oh, leave me alone, please leave me!" We should all sing that to Washington, DC. With our votes.

I was very pleasantly surprised by a letter from SAM MERWIN, JR.:

February 21, 1977

'The present epistle, if not the item that follows, was prompted by your review of Lawrence Sanders' THE TOMORROW FILE.

'As it happens, Lew Cameron's mother (a friend and neighbor) gave me a copy of the paperback edition some weeks ago and I read it with horrid fascination. Then I discovered a hardcover copy of Sanders' THE FIRST DEADLY SIN in Sylvia Margulies' bookshelves (yes, I've been editing MIKE SHAYNE MYSTERY MAGAZINE for her since Leo died late in '75) and read that, too (I'd been avoiding it as some sort of religious opus thanks to its title).

'I quite agree with you that Sanders deserves the whatever-it-is prize for TTF. Save for Phil Dick's MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE, I cannot recall reading any science fiction in recent years that has been in its class both for entertainment and for springboarding speculative thought (which, after all, is or should be, the purpose of the genre).

'To my mind, Sanders has but one flaw apart from a few irksome tricks of style. On purpose or not, he appears to be unable to create three-dimensional characters. His cast of performers is uniformly kinky, flawed, incomplete, programmed to fit the immensely complex convolutions of his story. In SIN he tried for such a tridimensional achievement in his police captain---and while he almost succeeded, this reader was left with the feeling that, somewhere in the background, Sanders was silently saying, "See? I can do it if I try!"

'No, he is not a puppet-master---he is a past master of marionette manipulation. In this respect, he reminds me of an annual event of my later childhood---the trip to see Tony Sarg's marionette show in Boston, usually around Easter vacation. They were superb---but so is Sanders' achievement---and the latter is certainly on a far more fascinating scale for alleged adults.

'So let us hope the accolade is not withheld from him because of clique-ishness. THE TOMORROW FILE is one hell of an achievement, no matter where the author's tongue rested while he wrote it.

'Your listing of prices in the old Sear Roebuck catalogue caused a nostalgic wince or three---until recall came to the rescue with thought

2-24-77 Congressional idiocy is in the rampage again, specifically, some senators want to pass a law making it illegal for the United

that millions of workers raised families on wages of one to two dollars a day, while working girls in large cities, living alone, survived on wages of three dollars per week and were proud to get it.

'As anyone who has in-laws or other family connections under his or her roof (her or his, with apologies to Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinum), all is relative.

'Similarly, your Rockefeller fixation, however soundly based, scarcely qualifies as a condition new to this country. Back in the early years of the century, my great-great Uncle Isaac Stephenson used a portion of his lumber millions to purchase a senate seat from Michigan (they were then, as ever since the republic's founding, a matter of state legislative appointment rather than of popular vote. Somewhat to my surprise, when reading a history of that era in government, I discovered that he was a pretty good senator.

'As for the superfluity of lawyers in our legislatures Richard, I recall reading another history of a much earlier era (the actual first Congress in 1789m when Senator John McClay, a redheaded radical from western Pennsylvania, beefed along with others that we were setting up a nation of pettifoggers (perhaps, had he come from Philadelphia, he might have phrased it differently).

'Also enclosed, a brief item relating to sex and science fiction suggested by Leigh Brackett almost two years ago when she and Ed (bless his soul, wherever) paid me a visit in Hollywood.'

Thank you, Sam, for the article, "Science Fiction and S-E-X (Or Vice Versa)" which will be in the next issue.

MAGAZINE RECEIVED

AMAZING, March, 1977. Vol.50, No.4. \$1. Ted White, Editor. Cover by Bierley.

Short Novel: "Alec's Anabasis" by Robert F. Young.

Novel: "The Bentfin Boomer Girl Comes Thru" by Richard A. Lupoff.

Short Stories: "Shibboleth" by Barry N. Malzberg.

"Our Vanishing Triceratops" by Joe Pumilia & Steven Utley.

"The Recruiter" by Glen Cook.

"Two of a Kind" by Richard W. Brown.

"Those Thrilling Days of Yesterday" by Jack C. Haldeman.

"An Animal Crime of Passion" by Vol Haldeman.

Editorial by Ted White.

The Amazing Interview: Hal Clement;

Conducted by Darrell Schweitzer.

The Club House by Rich Brown.

Or So You Say: letters.

COMMENT: A remarkably good issue, with several memorable stories. "Alec's Anabasis" is both interesting for its history and entertaining for its well-told story.

"Two of a Kind" is a shocker and evidence of how far we've come in sex content in sf. I think only Ted White could have published this one, of the magazine editors.

"An Animal Crime of Passion" is a delightful off-world crime story that will be often reprinted.

Ted's critical comments about MedAmeriCon are worth reading and thinking about.

A shame somebody forgot to change the "The Club House" byline to give Rich Brown credit for his fanzine reviews.

MY THESIS IS MOONSHINE,
YOUR ANTITHESIS IS TAX
COLLECTION, THE SYNTHESIS
IS A DEAD REVENOOR.



SMALL PRESS NOTES

SUPERHERO 44 is a new game sent by Donald Saxman. Set in the year 2044, it employs options...

'Everything needed to design your crime fighter, supply him with super powers, and equip him with a wide range of crime fighting equipment.

'Everything needed to design scenarios in which your hero gains experience combatting 32 different crimes.

'Background describing politics, technology, people, places and law in the year 2044.'

Contact Geneva Spencer, D-226 GRC, Bloomington, IN 47401. The cost is \$6.00 plus 30¢ postage.

Stuart David Schiff, editor and publisher of WHISPERS, has moved to: Box 1492-W Azalea St. Browns Mills, NJ 08015

He mentions having 15,000 lbs. of books, etc. I will never move again. I will die in this house, surrounded by my thousands of books, magazines, fanzines, Hugoes....

2-25-77 I see that George Meany, that crochety old man who heads the AFL-CIO, wants interest rates controlled, but rejects wage-price controls. He does not seem to understand that interest is the wages of saved capital. If those kinds of wages are frozen by law, capital will go into bonds, or stocks, or land, commodities... There would be precious little money available at controlled rates. It would be another example of government dogoodism defeating itself. All controls defeat themselves.

Meany, of course, still thinks he can get benefits for his group at the expense of others (and never mind the morality of that).

I have one more letter to print on the subject of the FAAN awards, the Hugoes, etc. After this one the subject is verboten in SFR for a long while.

LETTER FROM JIM MEADOWS III:

February 23, 1977

'I've been voting in the FAAN awards since they were set up nearly three years ago, voting in those categories I'm eligible to vote in. I don't vote for the Hugo Awards, but that in no way means that I find them invalid. I just never got around to it, and I can't make it to the worldcons anyway.

'I've been reading a lot of sniping at the FAAN awards since they were set up, and I've read (mostly second hand accounts) some sniping at the Hugo fan awards in recent months. I fail to see why the two awards have to be pitted against each other.

'I view the Hugo Awards as an effort to poll all of fandom, as sprawling and diversified as it is, on what they think is the best in various categories. It is, in short, a popularity contest, a phrase that some fans find offensive. The FAAN awards, however, are popularity contests too, but on a more specialized scale. Here, the sphere of activity is low circulation (usually less than four or five hundred) fannish fanzines. In this case the voters are those people directly involved in publishing, editing, writing for, drawing for, and loccing for these zines. Is this elitism? Yeah, I guess it can be. Non-SFWA members can't vote for the Nebulas either. But the ex-

istence of either does not make the Hugo Awards invalid.'

((The FAAn awards aren't elitist---they're exclusive, as, to a degree, the Hugo Awards are. Were you aware that a faction of faans tried to get the fan Hugo Awards abolished at the recent Worldcon?))

'However, much as I respect the Hugo Awards, I still don't vote in them, and I do vote in the FAAn awards. Therefore, according to your piece in the current SFR ((#20)), I am a jealous spoilsport, ignored by the mainstream of sf fandom because I lack the determination and probably the talent to compete for the big time.

'Obviously, I don't agree. So why do I vote in the FAAn awards?

'Because, Dick, although I enjoy your zine and LOCUS, both Hugo winners (and I wouldn't pay for them if I didn't enjoy them) I don't enjoy them in quite the same way I enjoy the work of some smaller fannish zines I've come to be attached to. It's not really a matter of quality; it's also a matter of the sort of fanzines these publications are. And their makeup makes it impossible for them to ever win a Hugo Award (or for the people who write and draw for them to do the same) without drastic changes.

'As good as I think a zine like Terry Hughes' MOTA is, I know it can't win a Hugo because its circulation is only about 300. The circulation of TITLE from Donn Brazier is about 150. There is no way such fanzines can win Hugos when over 1000 people are voting in the fan categories.

'To even consider being up for a Hugo nomination, the editors of such zines would have to increase their circulations to, say, the 500-750 level you suggested. What would happen? Well, first of all, the heavy interaction between editor and reader would be diluted, since now the editor would have to contend with a much larger body of readers. Possibly, though, the actual letter traffic would decrease, because these fanzines would probably not be available for the usual only. 500 is a lot to send out for no money.'

((I get much more feedback from readers now than when I published the faanish PSYCHOTIC and had a circulation of 300 or so.

((Are you saying that MOTA and TITLE are free and do not accept subscriptions? Why, even the FAAn Award winner two years running, Bill Bowers and his OWTWORLDS accepts subscriptions...even advertizes for subscriptions!!!! And of course Linda Bushyager accepts subscriptions.

((Should Bill be allowed to hog the award like that? Maybe if the

rules were re-written to exclude him...))

'Secondly, if these sort of fanzines tried to be "as good or better" than your zine or other Hugo winners, they would have to start being like you. Not imitators. But they would have to try for the same audience. They would have to publish on the same terms you publish on. And they don't. And I like them that way.

'The reason the FAAn awards were started, so I understand, is that the community of fans who delve into these fanzines wanted to compliment those they thought excelled in the field. One way of doing this is to vote for awards. This is not the only way, but awards are just another nice granfalloonish thing that fans like to do. I agree with this.

'I do not think, and I don't think that a majority of my co-voters think, that the FAAn awards are meant to replace the fan Hugos. Nor would I even say the FAAn awards are the definitive awards for fannish zines. I don't know how vast fandom is, and there might be other cliques of fannish fans that I don't know much about.

'I simply think the FAAn awards are a nice way of complimenting some people whose work I respect, and I find the hostilities that have been brewing around the whole thing somewhat irritating. Why can't fans just let the whole thing alone? Award systems are not that important (fandom itself isn't that important), and awards are not what fans strive for as an ultimate; it's just a symbol.'

Yeah...you're right. I think there should be four fan Hugo Awards, though: Best Fanzine, Best Amateur Fanzine, and Best Fan Writer, as well as the Best Fan Artist Hugo. I hope to Ghod the next Worldcon takes care of this hassle.

HA! WE HAVE
LIBERATED OUR
BROTHERS!

ZAP!



NEWSLETTER FROM ITALY BY GIANNI MONTANARI

January 6, 1977

'Dear Dick:

'I'd be a damned liar if I said that lately I've been sleeping well: I could otherwise stay in the truth and say that recently I have slept more or less for four hours per night. Recently it means during the last fortnight; the reason? Nothing to do with insomnia...work is a leit-motif which may very well substitute insomnia in the nights of an Italian editor, especially when it's work only you can do. I have just given the last stroke to: a) a translation of Damon Knight's collection IN DEEP for my GALASSIA; b) a translation of Katherine MacLean's THE MISSING MAN for a magazine published by a good friend who asked desperately for a good translation; c) a complete list of Italian SF collections since the beginning of the world for Pierre Versins; d) the first two chapters of my new novel (the title: I'm sure you're curious as my wife; up to now it ought to be DAIMON...at least for the first book of the duology -- I don't know the word which comes before trilogy); e) a very large diorama of Japanese warriors (samurai and others): miniature size, 1/35, an hobby I discovered I'm sharing with Don Wollheim who asked information about some Ussars of Piacenza; f) a bottle of Encordiale (1 liter), distilled and produced by our famous Military Pharmaceutic Institute...I have some good friends in the Army, since my service, just to stay well-informed about the news on every new putsch in preparation (they already tried one, do you know: Or so it seems...).

'Well: I just finished the aforesaid things, not quoting a wonderful journey with my wife to Yverdon, to the well-known MAISON D'AILLEURS run by Pierre Versins. Switzerland is behind the corner for a northerner (in Italy) and I took advantage from my last long Christmas holidays...last and long owing to my being a teacher, for Italian schools are usually closed from December 23 to January 7 but this year shall be the last to profit of this holiday; our austerity regime imposes a shorter period of holidays for every worker. And myself, being a sort of double (or triple) worker -- school, editorship, writing -- had to take his last chance from the situation.

'Let's stop these tears. I'm well and hope the same for you and your copine (I heard you have one, now): some short news. I found a book of yours (sexy, yeah?) in a bookstore in Yverdon; I met here a funny kind of publisher of sexy-political comics and sf (Kesseling, are you reading?) whom later I'd like you to hear from. I almost succumbed to the books of the MAISON D'AILLEURS but I held on the memory of my own books at home; I came back reading on the train something of the eight pounds of L'ENCYCLOPEDIE DE L'UTOP-IE, DES VOYAGES EXTRAORDINAIRES ET DE LA SCIENCE FICTION (per Pierre Versins, ed. L'AGE DE L'HOMME).

I arrived in Piacenza by night and my wife brought me home: she did a review (for the Bulletin in GALASSIA) of Poul Anderson's THE BROKEN SWORD and went to bed (you say she was won by the book? Hmm... you a treacherous fella), while I brightened up and went on with the translation of a Paul Walker's Interview (Damon Knight, obviously; to be published with IN DEEP).

'The Italian market? Oh, nothing really important; we are stuck at the point I illustrated in my last letter. The novel by Aldani to be published in my SFBC shall appear at the end of January, and I received already two options from the French! There's some stirring in Germany (for Italians) but nothing sure; in March I'm coming out with a number of GALASSIA full of Italian writers (coupled with a novella by Ted Sturgeon...I met him in Ferrara, in June; he's really The Man From Outer Reality; wonderful, and with this word I'm doing him just an injustice; are you interested in an Interview he gave to us in Ferrara?). The scene is working up some surprises but I fear it's too early...let's wait for my next letter, uh?

'P.S. Coming back from Versins, in Lausanne, I went to Paynot to buy the last MAGAZINE OF FANTASY & SF with the first installment of Leib-er's THE PALE BROWN THING, and on leaving the bookstore a big chunk of ice fallen from the roof grazed my head; it was rather sharp and I had to gurgle a Pernod before being able to look at my presque death with detachment. May it be that I bear a charmed life...or is this just a suggestion from the Macbeth I'm doing at school?'

THE TROUBLE WITH BEING NON-PARANOID IS THAT YOU FEEL SO...UNIMPORTANT.

PARANOIA IS NEVER HAVING TO SAY 'I TRUST YOU.'

2-27-77 Spring is poking its green head around the corner and winking at me. "Hey, Geis, another few days and you can have the pleasure of spading up the gardens, seeding, weeding, mowing...all kinds of delightful chores."

Get lost. Maybe in two weeks. I've still got lots of catch-up typing and reading to do.

But I did order a couple tomato plants from American Consumer Corp. ...you see their ads in the Sunday papers, magazines... And we got three strawberry plants from them for indoor growing and harvesting. These three plants, in potting soil, in a hanging pot next to the large diningroom window, are blooming already after about two weeks since we got them all dormant and tiny.

The tomato plants are coming up nicely. They are supposed to be an everbearing, super bountiful plant. Self-pollinating, I trust. You won't catch me letting any bees into the house.

I'm tempted to send for a couple of their dwarf banana trees, for indoor, year around fruit. That would be something!

Got to tear down the disintegrating shed out back of the garage and convert the land to another garden. I plan, finances willing, to get a Sears alluminum storage building for the tools, equipment and such, and set it up on the 14 x 14 cement patio which is rarely used for lounging and sunbathing. A 9 x 9 unit will do nicely.

What is Idi Amin up to in Uganda? Playing deadly ego-games with the world, and with Americans. Maybe we should ask the Israelis to rescue our citizens?

Jim Baen called the other day and we discussed a column for an upcoming GALAXY.

UPD dropped two winter issues of GALAXY, which was probably a good thing, whatever the motive, since the issues might have died in snowed in warehouses and stores in too many places. Still...it isn't a good sign.

BOOKS RECEIVED

LEGENDS FROM THE END OF TIME

By Michael Moorcock
DAW UY1281, \$1.25

'the satiric irony of Michael Moorcock's outlandish futuristic world is at its most entertaining in these stories of the hedonistic immortals who dwell at the End of Time.

'Werther de Goethe, womb-child and apprehensive optimist, finds innocence in the form of Catherine Gratitude. When Werther's paternal

feelings turn to lust, he rejoices in a remorse he has never known before.

'The Duke of Queens, always game for something diverting, challenges Lord Shark to a duel. To make the sport all the more fun for the spectators, the duel will be to the death---even if death is something of a trick for the immortals.

'And, finally, there's the arrival of prudish time-traveler Daf-nish Armatuce with her sixty-year-old son, Snuffles, in tow. Snuffles is all too delighted by what he sees at the End of Time, but the wanton abandon is a bit too much for his poor old mother.'

COMMENT: These three novelets, "Pale Roses," "White Stars," and "Ancient Shadows" were originally published in NEW WORLDS QUARTERLY. Harper & Row published the hardcover edition.

I couldn't get interested in this End of Time series; I am reminded of the members of a royal court playing at being peasants; idle pass-times, games...

ONE AGAINST A WILDERNESS

By William L. Chester
DAW UW1280, \$1.50.

'In the far north, warmed by volcanic fires, lies the undiscovered homeland of the people who became the North American Indians. Nato'-wa is what they called their land and within its forested and lush domain remains the last great unspoiled wilderness on Earth---a land of green jungles, of wild beasts, and primitive men.

'Kioga the Snow Hawk, son of wrecked explorers, was raised by the natives as one of their own. His stories, classics of lost-race adventure equal to Haggard and Burroughs, have long been treasured by sf readers.

'In this rediscovered work, DAW Booksbrings you more of Kioga's... exploits in that lost world.'

COMMENT: KIOGA AGAINST THE WILDERNESS is the previously published book in this series. DAW UW1253, \$1.50. These two books were originally published in 1936 and 1937 in BLUE BOOK magazine.

CRITICAL THRESHOLD

By Brian M. Stableford
DAW UY1282, \$1.25

'The planet called Dendra seemed too good to be true. One vast forest world, marvelous climate, few dangerous beasts, a balanced, hospitable ecology---all should have spelled out a good place for a human colony.

'But the original survey team had registered doubts, listed it as borderline without further explana-

tion. Nevertheless the politicians had okayed it and a colony had been landed there...and a hundred and fifty Earthly years had passed without anyone hearing from it.

'Now the recontact vessel DAEDALUS was coming to check up---and they found the climate as marvelous as before, the forest green and friendly, and the colony an inexplicable disaster. There was a biological and psychological puzzle that had to be solved for the sake of all human worlds---and for the crew of the DAEDALUS it was either crack it or crack up.'

COMMENT: The first DAEDALUS mission was THE FLORIANIS (DAW UY1255, \$1.25). These are basic, hardcore sf, not very well written.

THE DEVIL AND W. KASPAR

By Benjamin Appel

Popular Library, 445-03190, \$1.50.

'William Kaspar was not your everyday sinner. Quite the reverse.

'William had renounced the pleasures of the flesh. He had quelled his ambitions and appetites. He had donned the robes of a Buddhist monk to search for Nirvana in the human jungle of New York.

'But when a beautiful woman led him all the way into temptation... when a goatish sailor became his guide through the lower depths of depravity...when the Evil One Himself gave William one diabolical chance to save the entire earth from total destruction...

'William had to say yes...'

COMMENT: There is a bit of overwriting on page 8 that stopped me cold:

'Kaspar's heart had turned into a pair of clapping hands, the clapping hands turned into a racing motor hurtling the trembling monk down the long endless and horrifying highways of imagination.'

But I skimmed the rest of the novel and found it an implausible fantasy with an anti-nuclear power message.

MAGAZINE RECEIVED

ANALOG. March, 1977. Vol XCVII, No. 3. \$1.00. Ben Bova, Editor. Cover by John Schoenherr.

Novelettes: "Stardance" by Spider and Jeanne Robinson.

"Child of the Sun" by James Gunn. Short Stories: "A Rat of Any Psize" by Sam Nicholson.

"The Golden Years" by Christopher Anvil.

"The Shape of Plowshares" by C. L. Grant.

"Three Coffins" by Henry Melton.

"Children of Invention" by Hayford Pierce.

Science Fact: "Mastering the Art of Space Cooking" by Alfred Bester.

Reader's Departments:

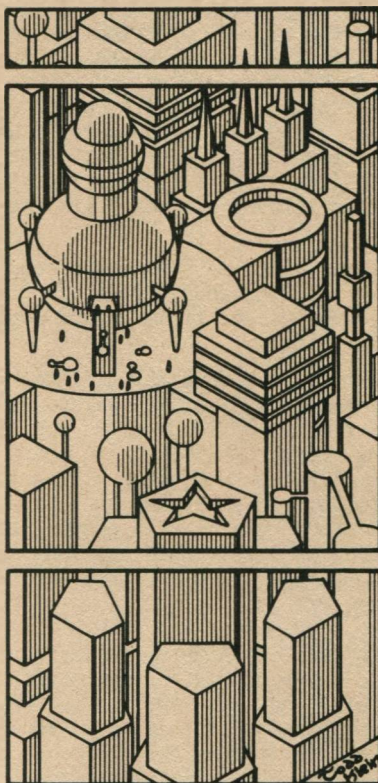
Guest Editorial by Diana King.

Biolog: Spider Robinson by Jay Kay Klein.

The Reference Library: by Lester del Rey.

Brass Tacks: letters.

COMMENT: Ben Bova is widening even more the variety of sf in ANALOG; more and more 'emotional problem' stories and funny-cute stories. There seems to me to be a gradual lessening of tension/interest in the fiction as more and more space is taken for "characterization".



3-6-77 I tried to talk to ~~Bob~~ Jimmy Carter yesterday, yes I did. Only his line was busy....as a couple million other people tried to talk to him, too.

Did you notice how many of the 40-odd who did ask him a question were kids? There was supposedly a computer choosing callers on a geographically balanced basis. But I suspect someone on the White House staff did some screening. Somebody had to ask them their names and where they were calling from so Walter Cronkite could tell it in the intro to each call.

Had I gotten through, I would have said, "Mr. President, are you still a member of David Rockefeller's Trilateral Commission?"

It would have been interesting if a Libertarian had gotten through, or a knowledgeable member of the

John Birch society, or a tax rebel, or a gay libertarian...

But, somehow, none of them did. And, somehow, I doubt if any of them ever will.

1984 is coming on... The latest symptom is a plan by the IRS to build ten regional super computer banks to hold EVERYBODY's tax returns and 'related information'. The regional computer centers would be interconnected.

It would cost as much as a billion dollars to create. Never mind the cost of maintenance. More than 48,000 IRS employees would have access to all the data from more than 9,000 terminals.

The IRS spokesman who is publicly defending the idea says it would make safeguarding the existing information about people in govt. hands easier. Sure. They always do it for our benefit, don't they?

It's that 'related information' kicker that interests me. And that this nationwide, all-embracing dossier system on everyone is proposed to include a great deal of spare capacity. Ah, yes, they have plans to include all kinds of 'related information.'

Stephen M. St. Onge, an SFR subscriber, recently sent a long letter of comment in which he reminded me of Menken's famous definition of Puritanism: "The haunting fear that someone, somewhere, is happy."

I instantly thought of a similar definition of Socialism: The haunting fear that someone, somewhere, is making a profit.

And this: Power lust: the haunting fear that someone, somehow, is free of government observation and control.

I have noticed a relationship of taxes that may be significant: In the last few years, whenever the social security tax bite goes up, the government finds it necessary to cut the federal tax rate, and to give "rebates" to the people.

I suspect that the federal, state and local governments, combined, have upped their tax bite to the percentage where taxes discourage people and corporations from trying to make more money, and that any greater tax bite cuts into real purchasing power and results in slower sales, higher unemployment, etc.

I always find it remarkable that governments (politicians) never try the incentive of cutting taxes to the point where people can see clearly that if they work harder they will be able to keep the extra money they earn.

Instead the politicians take more from the workers to give to those who don't work in order to stimulate the

economy. The prime rule being that first the money goes to the seat of political power, then the politicians take credit for giving it away to people and even some of it back to those from whom they've taken it.

BOOKS RECEIVED

THE MYTHOLOGY OF MIDDLE EARTH

By Ruth S. Noel

Houghton Mifflin, \$7.95

'This revealing study of Tolkien's great myth of Middle-earth compares it to the historic myths that have evolved in every culture in which man faces the challenges, asks the same questions, and lives in awe of the same forces. The similarities are evident and interesting. Tolkien was a student of mythology...as well as a renowned philologist. The differences are perhaps even more interesting and significant, for the mythology of Middle-earth is based on a combination of mythic tradition and the imagination of a twentieth-century ((Christian)) Englishman.'

'The book is divided into four parts: Themes, such as Fate and the Denial of Death; Places, such as Middle-earth and Numenor; Beings, such as Hobbits, Men, and Wizards; Things, such as Dragons and Rings of Power.'

'The book includes a glossary, to assist the reader in tracing the various sources.'

COMMENT: For some reason I don't feel any great desire (never have) to read Tolkien, so this book, for Tolkien aficionados, has little appeal.

SEARCH THE SKY

By Frederik Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth
Bantam 02983-5, \$1.50

'Ross took the field assignment for a lark. But the routine business trip catapulted him into a brain-blasting mission to a galaxy of alien worlds:..

'#A utopia ruled by ancients where youth was the greatest sin.

'#A society dominated by savage Amazons where being male was the lowest crime.

'#A coin-operated wasteland where the prime law was conformity.

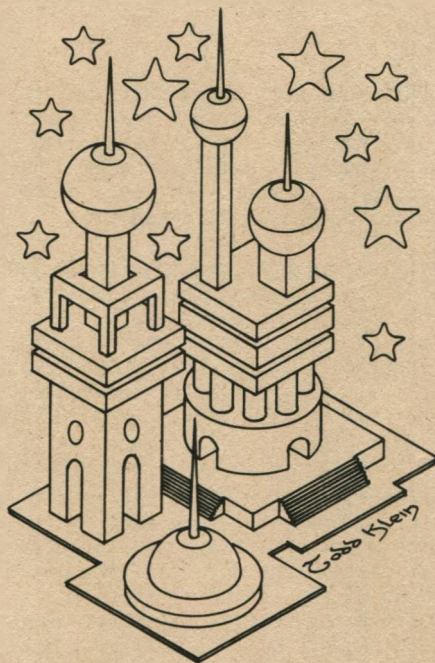
'Tomorrow's terrifying marketplace where one man bargained for humanity's fate.'

COMMENT: First published in 1954. I started the book with the idea of skimming, but got hooked and enjoyed it up to the point where Ross touched down on the planet ruled by old men; the ancients ruled by intense propaganda and enforced their rules with pain wands. One touch... Such a society didn't seem workable to me

and I lost interest in the novel.

If a 'what if' civilization isn't plausible, forget it. The old men were too vulnerable and the 'kids' were too tractable. There are always a few smart rebels who can find ways to take short cuts and get their way. In this gerontological society, it would have been ridiculously easy to mount and execute a mass rebellion.

I think the standards of sf have risen quite a bit since this was written.



THE SPOTTED MEN---DOC SAVAGE #87

By Kenneth Robeson

Bantam 10075-0, \$1.25

'The events were bizarre. First a millionaire industrialist vanished. Then, his workers broke out in red spots and went crazy. The man of bronze and his courageous crew sped to the scene of disaster to search for the perfidious plotter willing to gamble the minds and bodies to amass a vast fortune. Were they already too late?'

COMMENT: Originally published in DOC SAVAGE magazine, March, 1940. I never did get interested in this series, not in 1940 and not now. I loved G-8 and his Battle Aces, though.

WE NEVER WENT TO THE MOON

America's Thirty Billion Dollar Swindle!

By Bill Kaysing and Randy Reid
Eden Press

Distributed by Loompanics, Unlimited
POB 264

Mason, MI 48854

\$7.95 + 75¢ shipping charges.

COMMENT: Mostly photos and copies of letters, this 8-1/2 x 11 ninety page book is a hash of assertions, half-baked questions and sloppy thinking. Kaysing, an ex-aerospace engineer, makes much of the failure rate of the Apollo engines up until they were used for the actual missions, whereupon they all worked perfectly. He thinks that is too much to believe. He shows photos taken from the moon and asks repeatedly, "Where are the stars?!" in the black sky. He thinks the photos were faked from Earth, in photo labs. He offers no proof, only assertions and suspicions. Apparently he did not think to ask a few professional photographers why the stars would not show in published photos.

The entire series of moon landings were faked, the result of a massive conspiracy? It is VERY hard to believe, and I suspect his case could be demolished by anyone with a fair knowledge of science and the Apollo program.

A curious book, interesting, in my opinion, for the demonstration of a paranoia/delusion.

CRACKPOT

By Ron Goulart

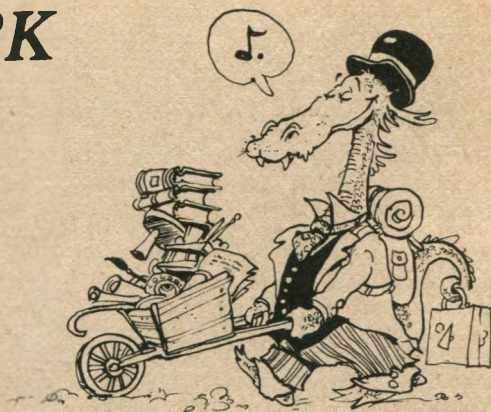
Doubleday, \$5.95

'Welcome to twenty-first century America. A nation still recovering from the political upheavals of World War III. A completely automated society in which the ruling classes are protected by servants and security forces provided by NRA--- National Robot and Android. A society where the pursuit of pleasure distracts most citizens from knowing or caring about America's current war with its Mexican neighbors. But two of its citizens did care and would soon learn that betrayal and intrigue were conducted on very sophisticated levels in the year 2015.'

COMMENT: On the dustjacket Doubleday labels Ron 'The Mack Sennet of Science Fiction'. But there is much more to Ron Goulart's books than farce and slackstick; he's funny, he's startling, he's clever, witty, and satirical and he never stifles his readers--he gives what you're paying for. In addition, Ron Goulart is one hell of a skilled writer! He packs more information into a page, entertainingly, than any other writer I can think of. He shows character by action and dialog, and he doesn't stop the story for anything. Write on!

FILLERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE! YOU
HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BUT YOUR *****

An Interview With TIM KIRK



SFR: Although your illustrations are seen virtually world-wide, your past seems clouded in mystery. Would you give us some background on yourself?

KIRK: Unfortunately, I've never been a steeplejack, a short order fry cook, a numbers runner, a stoker on a tramp steamer, or anything else that makes for a colorful background. I am a child of southern California suburbia, a bloodied but unbowed product of the Long Beach Unified School District, and a graduate with a master's degree in illustration from California State University at Long Beach. The only non-art job I ever held was gardening for a department store, which consisted mainly of things like washing off sidewalks, planting ground cover and showing gophers the error of their ways (I never had the heart to kill them; I just gave them \$10, a new suit of clothes, and deposited them in our competitor department store's flower beds). I've been doing freelance artwork for five or six years, with varying degrees of success.

SFR: You are currently working for Hallmark Cards in Kansas City and, as I understand it, have recently gotten a promotion. What is it like working for a firm like Hallmark?

KIRK: The promotion was more of a lateral move, but I am now in a department---Humorous Illustration---that is about as compatible as possible with what I enjoy doing most. Working for a large corporation has been an enormous education for me, and I'm grateful for the experience ---as much in human relationships and balances of power as in anything else. They have a swell employee cafeteria, too.

SFR: Your work shows that you are a very talented artist and illustrator. What sort of art background have you had? Has this background aided you in your vocation and avocation or has it hindered you?

KIRK: I've been drawing for as long as I can remember; I still possess some of my very early stuff. I did lots of space wars, pirates, bank robberies, Mickey Mouse (Disney was an early and continuing influence; the work of Carl Barks, who did the finest Disney comic stories, was perhaps even stronger), and a host of other, mostly quite violent, stuff. Another strong early influence were the strange and surrealistically wonderful 'thirties cartoons of the Fleischer brothers: Betty Boop, mostly. My first pinup. I think this sort of early, primal influence sticks with an artist throughout his/her career, and can crop up in the most unlikely places.

SFR: You have the skills to do almost anything with the field of illustration, of that I'm sure. So, why on Earth did you choose science fiction to do your best work in?

KIRK: My emphasis on fantasy and science fiction (or speculative fiction) illustration is due mostly to interest. I've always been fascinated with it, and read more of it than anything else. I have read MOBY DICK, but I suppose that would qualify as borderline fantasy on a quasi-metaphysical level. I like Dickens. I love anything written by S.J. Perelman or James Thurber. Imaginative fiction, though, has always been my first love, and I naturally turned to it when I started thinking of illustrating other people's stories rather than my own.

SFR: My congratulations on winning another fan Hugo. How many have you won?

KIRK: I have five Hugos.

SFR: Did winning this particular Hugo, since you designed the base, give you any additional pleasure over your others?

KIRK: I think the base and the rocket complimented each other fairly well; the base didn't come out quite as I'd hoped, but it was a change, at least, from wooden bases. I hope the other recipients liked them. I do feel somewhat incestuous winning a Hugo whose base I designed, though.

SFR: In an earleir conversation you mentioned you thought there were some problems with the way Hugo awards are given. Could you elaborate on that and perhaps explore some of the changes you'd like to see?

KIRK: As much as I enjoyed winning, I was also embarrassed. I didn't do nearly enough fan work last year to qualify for a Hugo, let alone win one. I very much appreciate the votes, but I hope people aren't voting in some categories out of habit. There are many deserving and talented people in every one of those categories, and when the same people keep winning year after year I suspect the runners-up become a little cynical about the whole thing. I don't know what the answer is. At this point, I feel like disqualifying myself, but that won't solve many of the flaws inherent in the system.

SFR: One of my perennial gripes, and one that seems to be shared by the majority of professional illustrators in science fiction, is the low pay received by these very talented men and women. What are your feelings on the matter?

CONDUCTED BY JON GUSTAFSON

KIRK: I am, of course, in favor of thousands of dollars being paid to science fiction illustrators; but the prices are only as good as the markets. A science fiction magazine can't be expected to pay as much for a cover as, say, TV GUIDE or THE NEW YORKER; the market, the reader volume, simply isn't there. Books are a somewhat different story, but, with a few individual exceptions, there still doesn't seem to be enough parity with the mainstream markets. Volume, again, seems to be the key. I know of few sf illustrators (in fact, probably only one that I'm reasonably certain of) who make six-figure incomes ala mainstreamers like Bob Peak or Mark English. I'm certain, though, that there's plenty of room for improvement in payment rates.

SFR: Do you have any ideas on how the payment for sf illustrations could be raised?

KIRK: No. Rick Sternbach's recently formed artists' organization os a hopeful sign.

SFR: How do you feel on the controversy, if that is the right word, about giving artists credit in books and magazines for the work they do?

KIRK: There should be no controversy; it's ridiculous. What conceivable justification could there be for not giving an artist credit? How can an artist develop a reputation if no one knows what he/she has done?

SFR: In a recent interview with Kelly Freas that I conducted at this year's Worldcon, he stated that, in his opinion, the artist who does a cover illustration should not only get paid for the work, but also should get a small royalty on each book sold. This, I think, he was applying to the paperback field, where the cover is often the only reason a book gets sold. What do you think about that idea?

KIRK: Yes, definitely. I've worked on a royalty basis in several instances, but it's not common practice as far as I know. I also think an artist should as a rule have his/her artwork returned after use, if possible. Both of these, of course, require extra work on the part of the publisher; royalty statements must be issued, and so forth. But cover art has a great deal to do with a book's success, especially in the case of paperbacks. I'm positive I'm not the only soul on earth who buys books for their covers alone, covers that often conceal absolutely rotten contents. Illus-

tration deserves much more credit than it gets.

SFR: About the organization that Rick Sternbach has started---The Association of Science Fiction Artists...ASFA; at the moment it is an information disseminating organization only, giving relevant information to artists across the country. Do you think this is what it should stay, or do you feel it should become (or try to become) a more active organization?

KIRK: I think it's a sterling idea, and I hope it works. I don't think it will become anything like a union or a pressure group; given the basically individualistic nature of artists, I don't believe that's possible, and I don't think that's what Rick intended anyway. It should at least provide a sort of forum for artists to compare notes, operating in a similar manner to SFWA. I may be entirely wrong about this, but it's the impression I got. I hope it develops into whatever sort of entity will most realistically benefit the artists.

SFR: Do you enjoy conventions? What did you think about the 1976 Worldcon in Kansas City?

KIRK: Oh, yes. I enjoy conventions for the same reason I enjoy beating myself over the head with a ballpeen hammer: it feels so good to stop. I have had a lot of fun at conventions, met some of my very best friends, and been provided with an excellent showcase for my work through the artshows, for which I must thank Bjo Trimble. The art shows have introduced a lot of tender young artists to their potential public, and to the editors and publishers who may use them in the future. I personally had a great time at MidAmericon, though I know reaction was very mixed.



SFR: What do you feel about the rise of columns in various fanzines that critique---and criticize---sf illustration? Do you think they will have any kind of impact on the tastes of fandom?

KIRK: I'm very pleased to see them. They serve to keep the artists on their toes, if nothing else. Some of the critics are, of course, more knowledgeable than others, and there are some whose opinion I respect more than others. Critics in any field can only analyze, dissect, and compare; they can't force a gut reaction on a viewer, and I suspect they rarely cause a viewer to change his mind if he's already made it up. THE NEW YORKER may think the Ronald Coleman LOST HORIZON is sloppy, cornball and sentimental, but it's very nearly my favorite film, and I don't think one neutrino less of it after reading the review. A bad review sometimes makes me more fiercely defensive of a film, play, book, or painting than I was before I read the review. At any rate, I hope the trend toward critiquing sf illustration continues, but I hope the critics are knowledgeable enough to command the respect of not only their readers but the artists they analyze as well.

SFR: Is there any question that you have always wanted to be asked and yet has never come up? If so, please ask and answer it.

KIRK: Not offhand. Thank you for your kind attention, and remember: many artists are human beings, and should be treated as such. Good evening.

3-7-77 Fans of Mack Reynolds have organized into a group called THE REYNOLDS CIRCLE, c/o Pat Botempo, POB 721, Hillside, NJ 07205.

BOOKS RECEIVED

COLD CHILLS

By Robert Bloch
Doubleday, \$5.95

'A new collection of chilling stories---science fiction, fantasy, and psychological suspense---chosen from the best of Robert Bloch's output during the years 1968 to 1975. In the personal commentaries which follow the stories, describing how they came to be written, Bloch challenges the reader to consider whether the inspiration came from God---or the Devil. The forces of good and evil, divine and diabolical, are at war in these exciting tales.'

Introduction by Robert Bloch.

"The Gods Are Not Mocked."
"How Like a God."
"The Movie People."
"The Double Whammy."
"In the Cards."
"The Animal Fair."
"The Oracle."
"The Play's the Thing."
"Ego Trip."
"Forever and Amen."
"See How They Run."
"Space-Born."
"The Learning Maze"
"The Model."

THE SPACE VAMPIRES

By Colin Wilson
Pocket Books 80916, \$1.75

'When Captain Carlsen entered the vast derelict spaceship, he was stunned by its awesome splendor---and shaken by the discovery of its immobilized humanoid passengers.

'Later, after three of those strange aliens had been transplanted to Earth, his foreboding was more than justified. The creatures were energy vampires whose seductive embraces were fatal, whose lust for vitality was boundless. As they took over the willing bodies of their victims and sexual murders spread terror throughout the land, Carlsen worked toward their destruction---even though he was erotically drawn to the most beautiful vampire of all.'

COMMENT: I enjoyed this novel when it was first published in hardcover by Random House last year, but felt it became too complicated, static, and confusing at the end.

THE DYING EARTH

By Jack Vance
Pocket Books 81092, \$1.25

'They wait...in a dying world of mystical spells, occult curses,

and demonic creatures of the night.

'They are Turjan, the scientist who struggles to create life... T'sais, the enchantress from Embel-yon, who journeys to Earth seeking beauty and love...Guyal of Sfere, born with an ache for knowledge that carries him to the Museum of Man and the wisdom of the universe.'

COMMENT: One of the classics of sf/fantasy, and one of the most beautifully written.

Effective BEM cover by Hildebrandt.

GETTING INTO DEATH and Other Stories

By Thomas Disch
Pocket Books 80926, \$1.75

"Apollo."
"The Asian Shore."
"The Birds."
"The Colors."
"Death and the Single Girl."
"Displaying the Flag."
"Feathers From the Wings of An Angel."
"Getting Into Death."
"The Joycelin Shrager Story."
"Let Us Hasten Quickly to the Gate of Ivory."
"The Master of the Milford Altarpiece."
"The Persistence of Desire."
"The Planet Arcadia."
"Quincunx."
"Slaves."
"[X] Yes."

COMMENT: I liked his controversial novel, CAMP CONCENTRATION, and liked his novel 334. I like his realistic, bizarre, subversive approach. I don't have time to read this collection now, but someday...

MOVIE REVIEW

WIZARDS, by the man who produced some X-rated animated, full-length cartoon features in recent years, is supposed to take place ten million years in the future, in a time of elves, fair-

ies, and mutant, evil creatures left over from a horrendous atomic world war.

The producer, Bakshi[?], is under the impression that Hitler and the Wehrmacht and Stukas are the ultimate of evil, and that the mere sight/sound of newsreels of them will freeze the Good Guys of the far future in a funk of sheer terror, while an army of even more horrible mutant creatures and robots overwhelms them.

The plot is the struggle between Good and Evil; two opposing sorcerers. The good sorcerer is a raffish, engaging, earthy enjoyer-of-life.

(He has a very well-endowed almost-fairy girlfriend who steals the show most of the time.)

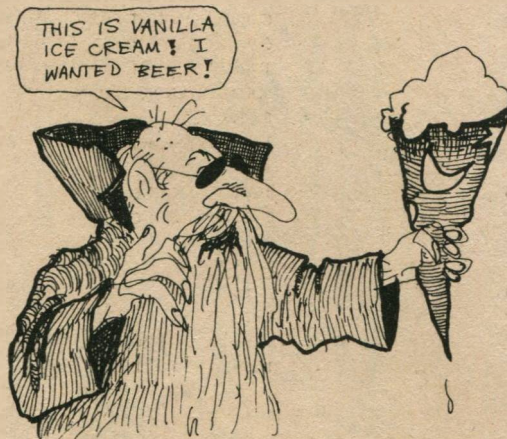
The points of my thumbs-down review are: Hitler and his war machine were chosen as the embodiments of evil because there was a lot of newsreel footage to use (and it was used ---to pad and pad and pad...); and the incredible assertion that useable film of Hitler and the second world war had survived, along with workable tanks, guns, ammo, planes, a motion picture projector...for ten million years! Who the fuck does this joker think he's kidding?

A bad film; a rip-off. They skimmed outrageously on the costs of animation, and dumped on the audience's intelligence. I suspect Bakshi is well under forty; he didn't live through WW2 and has a warped image of the times, a warped understanding of fantasy, and a warped concept of his audience.

WIZARDS has many moments of charm, delight, satire, effective shock, and delightfully well-done animation. Many, many lovely bits. Too bad his Message was too crudely thrust into the story.

MAGAZINE RECEIVED

ANALOG. April, 1977. Vol. XCVII, #4. Ben Bova, Editor. Cover by Vin-



cent Di Fate.

Serial: AFTER THE FESTIVAL by George R. R. Martin. [Part One of Four Parts]
Science Fact: "The Legal Rights of Aliens" by Robert A. Freitas, jr.
Short Stories: "Lauralyn" by Randall Garrett.

"Letter Rip" by George M. Ewing.
"A Rain of Pebbles" by Stephen Leigh.

"A Short History of World War LXXVIII" by Roy L. Prosterman.

Novellette: "Man With a Past" by Bernard Deitchman.

Reader's Departments: Editorial by Ben Bova.

Biolog: George R. R. Martin.
The Reference Library: Lester del Rey.

Brass Tacks: letters.

COMMENT: AFTER THE FESTIVAL starts slowly, but picks up pace and tension near the end of this first installment. I find it hard to believe that the hero has the money and time to just drop everything and journey across the galaxy at the beck and call of a former wife. A romantic notion, but not explained or justified.

"Man With a Past". about an apparent super-agent for UFOs, was good, but seemed to fall apart at the end.

"Letter Rip" is a clever, turn-the-tables-on-the-government-snoops story.

3-8-77 Timothy Roaix wants to contact fans in and around South Windsor, CT. His intent is a club or group for exchange of ideas, opinions, etc. about sf. His address:

Timothy Roaix
POB 567
South Windsor, CT 06074

David B. Williams sent me xerox copies of the NATIONAL LAMPOON sampler for their new illustrated fantasy magazine due on sale in mid-March, name of HEAVY METAL.

Cover shows a female robot beating a male robot to pieces with a huge wrench. She is wearing spike-heeled shoes. Real heavy humor and satire, right?

One of the two story-illo pages shows a group of future soldiers eager to kill. The other page shows a naked man shooting an Arcturian shape-changer who has become a lovely naked woman. He calls her a demon from space and shoots--his gun.

This magazine is from France, we are told. Charter subs are \$10 for the first 12 issues.

Heavy on the sex and sado-maso elements, boys, and it'll make you a fortune, right? Right! Magic formula. For the moment. Maybe forever.

I can't feel outraged or moralistic about this. Hell, if a certain percentage of people want to read/see it, that's okay. That's what freedom and free enterprise is all about---all sides of the human psyche naked and unashamed. I can't feel indignant that "exploitation" of sex and sado-maso aspects of human nature goes on if I don't mind the "exploitation" of other "weaknesses" like fear of crime, fear of dying, fear of fatness, fear of loneliness, fear of unemployment, lust for sweets, lust for money, lust for power, etc., etc., etc. are used by others to make money.

It's so damned easy to say THIS IS IMMORAL PANDERING, EXPLOITATION OF MAN'S DARK FEARS AND DESIRES, when you're only projecting your own opinions and emotional hang-ups and turn-offs.

The controversy over capital punishment has provoked some thoughts. The point of killing killers is that this ultimate punishment is probably the ultimate deterrent. Some statistics seem to show that most murderers are committed in the white heat of overpowering anger and extreme emotional stress, usually in a family or love/hate relationship. People in such a state of turmoil do not stop to think of consequences, is the argument, and so the threat of punishment--any punishment--is beside the point.

And besides, once this killing rage is spent, once the extraordinary circumstances are past---90% of these 'killers' would never kill again.

But the law knows this, and makes distinctions between the crime of passion and the premeditated, planned murder.

Only the first degree murderer, the plotter and executor of a homicide, goes the capital punishment route.

And the question is: if the threat of execution won't deter the first degree murderer, what will?

Of course, the prospect of being killed if caught does (or did) deter a certain percentage of would-be, might-have murderers. We can never know--because they were scared off.

But I can think of some punishments that might even be more effective than execution, in preventing murder. Most people would rather be dead than....

#Be blind. (For, say, five years?)

#Be forced to walk naked down the middle of a downtown street at high noon.

#Be forced to live/naked in a cell full of worms and snakes and spiders.

#Eat their own shit and drink their own piss.

I know, I know... Cruel and inhuman punishment. Imagine forcing things like that on some poor soul who had planned to kill a lover or wife or husband or relative, for whatever reason, and who had then actually performed the killing. I would feel no compunctions at all in voting for such punishments.

And I have a sneaking hunch that such punishments, if given one after another (the parade first, then the cell full of crawlies, then the eating/drinking, then five years of blindness), would, once they were inflicted a few dozen times in well-publicized cases, would trigger a "NO! STOP!" in all but a very few psychopathic types.

BOOKS RECEIVED

IF THE STARS ARE GODS

By Gregory Benford & Gordon Eklund
Berkley/Putnam, \$7.95

COMMENT: The dustjacket of this book proclaims it a major philosophical science fiction novel.

That's almost enough to prejudice anyone, even me, against it.

But I started reading, and found it to be a very well-written episodic story... Not a story, a narrative of the space career of Bradley Reynolds, the man who found life on Mars, who met and understood the sun-worshipping aliens who visited the solar system, who helped discover intelligent life on Saturn, and who spent his final life seconds understanding the crystal-grid of Titan.

I was impressed with Reynolds, with his wisdom, his character, his understandings of people. HE is the book. The philosophy is overlooked, and forgettable, strictly speaking. And the final revelation, on the last page...is something that I may have read in ASTONISHING STORIES in 1939 or so.

Even so, the book is recommended, because there is a strength and grace in the style, in the narrative, in Bradley Reynolds, that makes the reading a pleasure. This is mature writing, adult science fiction.

GALAXIES INTERIEURES

Edited by Maxim Jakubowski
(Orig. title: NIGHT SPECULATIONS)
Editions Denoel, Paris, #224, 14,50F

COMMENT: It came, I cannot read French, and it was originally published in England. It is an collection of essays about science fiction by: Paul Ableman, Brian W. Aldiss, Hilary Bailey, J.G. Ballard, Adam Barnett-Foster, Barrington G. Bayley, Graham Charnock, Maxim Jakubowski, Langdon Jones, Ian McEwan, Michael Moorcock, Christopher Priest, Bob

Shaw, Andrew Travers, and Ian Watson. A well-made paperback.

WORLDS IN COLLISION

By Immanuel Velikovsky

Pocket Books 81091, \$1.95

COMMENT: This is the first paperback edition of this first, blockbuster Velikovsky book. He immersed himself in all of mankind's ancient history, myths, legends, and wrote this book--which concludes that there were vast and terrible catastrophes in mankind's history: near collisions with other planets, shifts in orbit and seasons, in the poles, horrendous winds and quakes and floods.... The near extinction of mankind. And from this cosmology, this past scenario he had deduced, he predicted some of the conditions that would be found on Venus and the Moon and Mars---to the embarrassment and confounding of his establishment scientific enemies who had branded him a charlatan and a fraud and who had interfered with the first hard-cover publication of this book, and who have waged a continuing campaign against him since 1950, when the book first saw print.

It's a fascinating presentation, and convincing. If you haven't read it, do so. I suspect that, years after his death and the death or retirement of his strongest opponents in the established sciences, he will be proved essentially correct.

3-11-77 Ahh, yes... The wonderful county of Multnomah has just notified me that the assessed valuation of my home has been upped from \$19,600 to \$22,980. I suppose my taxes will be around \$750. next November. Unless the state legislature passes what appears to be a very popular law limiting property taxes to 3% of household income. I'll buy that.

I've been spending some time in the gardens whenever a rainless day has happened, and have got them all spaded, raked and mostly planted. I'm going to try cantalopes again.

Interesting statement in a letter from Mauro Lucentini in the March COMMENTARY:

'Economists in Italy are now talking of two separate economies--an official one, recognized by the government, the unions and the law, and a "black" or "underground" one, for which nobody possesses any records, but which nevertheless appears to have great impact and great relevance to Italian life.

'This dual reality is the result both of the destructive forces put into motion by "socialization" and of the ingenuity shown by Italians in escaping them.'

The Market lives.

ECONOMIC NOTES: Now even Arthur Burns, head of the Federal Reserve, is warning that the private banks can no longer loan millions to the impoverished Third World countries; he wants the oil-rich countries to make the loans directly, instead of sending their oil-gotten gains to safe and (they think) secure deposits in the biggest American, English and European banks. The big banks have loaned these billions to dead-beat countries (it is increasingly clear) and are extremely vulnerable, since the oil-rich depositors may soon get nervous and pull that money out, leaving the banks with bankruptcy on their faces.

Secretary of Treasury Blumenthal did grant the emergency loan to New York city, as expected. This puts off the evil day of having to find a billion dollars a few months further away, I guess.

I suspect that twenty or thirty years from now, New York city's bankruptcy will be a landmark indicating when the world's financial collapse began....

Sooner or later, this country will have to cut way back on our use of oil, or force the OPEC to reduce the price of oil (either by inflating our money to the point where oil is relatively cheap again, and forcing OPEC to not raise prices to keep pace, or we will have to use military force one way or another).

Probably there will be a series of ever-increasing taxes on gasoline to force savings, shifts to smaller cars....

Ho-ho. Leonard Woodcock, head of the UAW, is leading a committee of Rockefeller agents (Woodcock is a member of Rockefeller's Council on Foreign Relations) to Vietnam, to oil the way for diplomatic recognition and trade arrangements. The former enemy will be nice guys, they'll appear to really try to clear up the MIA and missing prisoners question, and Peanut will smile upon them, and lo, Exxon will get oil rights to some of the rich fields off Vietnam's coast.

Business comes first, before and after patriotism. It is my opinion that a young person in this country would have to be a bloody fool to be willing to fight a foreign war for the good old USA.

This country's Establishment, which fought and lied so hard to win over there (with every American life and tax dollar it could muster) is now eager to make a deal with those communists. How does this make those parents feel who lost sons in that 'adventure'? How do the vets feel? Ripped off? Conned? Shit upon? Betrayed?

Klaus Boschen, a benevolent New York city subscriber, sent me xeroxed copies of the CONSPIRACY DIGEST (Summer 1976, Fall 1976, and Winter 1977) for my information.

An intriguing magazine which gives a rundown of the major (and some minor) conspiracy cosmologies. The major reality-view is that there is a money/power locus centered around the Rockefellers and around the group of European banks led by the Rothschilds' megafortunes.

There is a disagreement on tactics between the two groups, as to how best to bring about total world control and what kind of civilization should be fashioned. There is, it is asserted, still a good deal of rivalry going on between the two power centers, with as yet no clear winner.

All world events, including cultural forces like "no-growth" and "ecological" movements have to be considered in this equation, since Rockefeller money and media (TIME, WASHINGTON POST, NY TIMES, CBS, NBC, to name the major voices) fund and propagandize these "movements."

It is claimed that the Rockefellers clandestinely fund various terrorist and rebel groups in order to terrorize the people into wanting ever more government control of people and society.

CONSPIRACY DIGEST is food and drink for any paranoid, and just may be a warped mirror of the true state of world affairs.

Published quarterly, it is in the 8-1/2 x 11 newsletter format, about 8 pages per issue. It seems overpriced at \$15. for four issues. From: Alpine Enterprises, Box 766, Dearborn, MI 48121.

BOOK RECEIVED

CLOUDCRY

By Sydney J. Vav Scyoc

Berkley/Putnam, \$7.95

'Two humans and a birdlike alien, victims of the incurable "bloodblossom" disease, are banished to a remote, unexplored planet. Escaping from quarantine, they discover the fantastic, decadent city of a once-great race whose descendants now live in primitive squalor. In one of the natives, Aleida, lies the potential to wield the enormous powers of the ancients, to focus the energy of

stars through her mind. As spirits enter and possess the three exiles, Aleida discovers the secret of the power-crystals that will enable her to harness her own latent might. She flees the city and races to the crystals. Breaking free of possession, the men follow her, but the bird man, driven mad with the savage, murderous desires of his race, pursues them all. Yet even he cannot stop Aleida from reclaiming her destiny in the dazzling transfiguration that climaxes this novel.'

COMMENT: The bird-creature, with its fierce instincts and lust for perch, steals the novel. Told by multiple viewpoint, the story bogs down in repetitive experiences once the trio reach the ancient city. Full of fantasy science, the story becomes hard to believe. As a result of its interaction with the ancient alien spirits, the humans and the Ehminheer are cured of their terrible disease.

MAGAZINE RECEIVED

FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION. April 1977. Vol. 52, No.4, Whole Number 311. \$1. Edward L. Ferman, Editor. Cover by David Palladini, for "The Hundredth Dove."

Novelets: "The Detweiler Boy" by Tom Reamy.

"Daughter of the Vine" by Charles W. Runyon.

"Manatee Gal Ain't You Coming Out Tonight" by Avram Davidson.

Short Stories: "The Pdiatrist's Tale" by Wilma Shore.

"Clang! Clang! Clang! Went the Trolleybird" by Charles E. Fritch.

"Catapult To the Stars" by Michael G. Coney.

"The Hundredth Dove" by Jane Yolen.

Books: Algis Budrys.

Films: Beauty and Beast Redux by Baird Searles.

Cartoon: Gahan Wilson

Science: The Dark Companion by Isaac Asimov.

F&SF Competition.

COMMENT: Tom Reamy scores again with his Hammett/Chandler style of detective writing. Very, Very Good. Runyon's "Daughter of the Vine" is good, suspenseful, intriguing sf. The Fritch is a madcap fantasy that sticks with you---if you believe in trolleybirds. Coney's story is set in his THE JAWS THAT BITE future---the catapult glider crowd, characters, society. Solid character story with a twist. I was disappointed with Avram's story---it seemed too thin for all those words, although the Jamaica-type dialect is lovely to "hear" as you read.

A fine issue, with the Reamy story the standout.

3-14-77 The spectacle of our government protecting us from sacharine by banning it in this country, is appalling.

Consider: sacharine has been used in this country for 80 years, and there have been no cases of cancer attributed to it.

The research/tests used to prove sacharine is a carcinogen involved feeding rats the equivalent of 200 grains per day for a lifetime. That comes to enough sacharine to sweeten 800 cups of coffee per day.

Most people don't use that amount in a year.

But, yes, a human being might develop cancer of the bladder if he ingested 200 grains of sacharine per day for life--sixty years?

So? 200 grains is roughly the equivalent of twenty-five pounds of sugar, in sweetening power.

How many people do you know who could eat 25 pounds of sugar every day and last even one year?

Shouldn't sugar be banned?

What about salt? Pepper? Aspirin? What would happen to anybody who ate 25 pounds of ANYTHING for a few years?

I'm afraid that when the FDA discovers this truth we'll all starve to death---all food will be banned because of the physical impossibility of its hypothetical long-term effect. The bureaucrats will have achieved their greatest victory against the forces of reason and will have protected the citizens to death.

JAMES TIPTREE, JR. is a woman, reveals the Jan. 30th issue of LOCUS. She is Alice Sheldon, 61, a married, semi-retired experimental psychologist.

That's a pseudonym for the books!

WOMEN SF WRITERS SHOULD COME OUT OF THE CLOSET AND GIVE UP PSEUDONYMS

I have here a LETTER FROM DOUGLAS BARBOUR, which I publish sic because I respect his look-at-me punctuation, yes I do.

7.3.77

'You're fine; SFR is fine, even the weather's fine; but: Darrell Schweitzer's reviews & comments are not fine. I think you overuse him, & though it's nice to have interviews, I would propose that yr best ones have been by others (vide: Freff's interview with Kelly Freas). His questions often seem to vague; & they tend to wander from the point.

'Actually, I've finally been driven to write by the exchange in #20 between Barry Malzberg & Schweitzer. Malzberg is in the right & he needs no one to defend him on that score. But more than that he's a damned good writer. I've expostulated on the values of his best fictions elsewhere, but it needs to be said (pace Schweitzer) that Malzberg has inspired positive feelings in many readers, people I'd tend to trust as critics far more than him. I don't feel I'm in bad company when I'm with folk like Brian Aldiss, Joanna Russ & Robert Silverberg. Moreover, Malzberg sure doesn't sound like he's radiating contempt for his field in the various prefaces he's written for the Best of series from Pocket Books. Indeed, he is extraordinarily generous in his praise of those he admires.

'My other great complaint against Schweitzer refers to his utterly silly use of the phrase "non-functional word patterns" as a tool of criticism. It's a cop out of the worst sort. Schweitzer's problem is a) that his concept of 'function' in literature is far too narrow for a person reading contemporary sf, let alone anyone even partially aware of the whole realm of contemporary letters; & b) he therefore approaches individual works of sf with his simple preconceptions up in front of him like a shield. Rather than seek to discover what the work might offer him, he looks for what he simplistically expects & if it isn't there calls the work a 'non-functional word pattern.' I don't think



such criticism is very useful. Please don't misunderstand me; I'm not saying he has to like everything---taste is personal---not even that he has to like Malzberg's work (which he has called 'non-functional etc'), only that he should realize that words (even word patterns, god help us) can have many different (& even simultaneously different) functions. I believe, for example, that Malzberg's work functions brilliantly as obsessive black comic visionary meditation upon the negative aspects of the technological & cybernetic revolutions & their effects upon individuals caught in the system. He has a fine sense of psychotic self-expression which is often in disjunctive presentation.'

((Gad, with praise like that, Barry doesn't need enemies.))

'His prose functions on a lot of levels, including that of parody (of sf cliches). But then Schweitzer thought DHALGREN was non-functional, too. Even you, with your essentially negative review, didn't make that mistake. DHALGREN may not thrill you and a number of other sf readers as it did me, but it sure as hell functions, on a lot of levels of meaning, emotion & experience.

'Well I babble on. I just can't take seriously the meaningless blather Schweitzer falls into when he meets something outside his narrow definition of function (he's often ok on the ordinary stuff which fits inside it). He would be well advised to cool his arrogance & wonder if perhaps the authors know more about what they're doing than he does, especially if they've been successful before.

'Meanwhile, I obviously do read your zine, even his offerings (which make me fume). Peace.'

Ummph. Well, on to a LETTER FROM GIAN PAOLO COSSATO, who has a few bones to pick.

23.2.1977

'Re: Gianni Montanari - SFR 19, p. 53:

'Just a couple of things that need to be straightened out: the publishers doing sf on a regular basis mentioned in the "Newsletter From Italy" are not the biggest!, they are the whole lot but one. The missing one is Libreria Editrice di Bologna with two hardbound lines (Classici and Slan) and a magazine, NOVA SF.

'...the SFBC de luxe collection is just a paperbound edition (it used to be de luxe up to 1968).

'Italian writers? I am afraid the great majority still lack that little something that makes a story sparkle; that's why they get pub-

lished so often behind the iron curtain.'

Aha. Stanislaw Lem will hate you.



3-18-77 That mission to Vietnam is getting a very good press--lots of puffs and benign comments. John Hart, a reporter on NBC news a few nights ago delivered a veritable sermon of hope and charity on the affair. I suffered for him, poor man, having to read something like that on prime time, knowing that his peers and knowledgeable people would recognize the shit he was mouthing for what it is. The Vietnamese have done their bit---turned over 12 bodies of MIAs, and have said nice things...all is sweetness and light...while the man nobody mentions, the man from the Brookings Institute, one of the Rockefeller economic think tanks, does his behind-the-scenes business, which is the whole reason for the mission; the MIAs are the window-dressing.

A state legislator in Washington was astonishingly honest yesterday: she admitted to reporters that two amendments to a state banking bill were handed to her by a representative of the state's largest bank. The amendments killed a benefit that would have accrued to the savings and loan industry (at the expense of the commercial banks). The amendments were accepted and the bill passed.

Last month the Consumer Price Index went up at a 10.8% "inflation" rate. Today it went up again, at a 12% annual rate. But, relax, it's a 'blip' and won't last...say the administration apologists.

There was a lone voice in Congress protesting that the way the Senators and Representatives were increasing the national debt it would reach over 700 billion dollars in another year. So who cares?

President Carter said he is willing to lose some popularity in order to push a strong energy conservation program, soon. He denied he is thinking of a 25¢-per-gallon gasoline tax. Of course, he may have decided on a 26¢ tax.... He isn't a liar, you know; he'll tell the truth sixteen different ways before he'll tell a lie!

TROUBLE IN SFWA

Theodore R. Cogswell, the imp in human form who used to edit the S.F. W.A. FORUM, and who was dismissed by Andy Offutt, President, has some tough things to say about Offutt in a broadside sent to SFWA members (and a few interested bystanders, like me).

Cogswell, in a printed letter dated 11 March, 1977, charges Offutt with maladministration because as a result of Offutt rulings and procedure changes the coming election of officers would have had Offutt running unopposed for re-election as President.

Cogswell has offered himself as an alternative, and reports that he has just learned that David Gerrold has also decided to run for President.

Cogswell does not like Offutt's ruling that stories in AMAZING and FANTASTIC cannot be used as credentials for SFWA membership, and cannot be considered for the Nebula awards. And Cogswell does not like the way the FORUM has been delayed due to Offuttian decision: one issue in five months. It used to be monthly or bi-monthly. The members, Cogswell, says, are not getting much for their \$12.50 membership fee.

COMMENT: I have let my membership lapse, and I know of at least one other member who has recently declined to renew; he doesn't like the 'clique' who now 'rule'. I get the impression the Science Fiction Writers of America has lost prestige and membership of late.

SMALL PRESS NOTES

The two Stephen Fabian FANTASTIC NUDES portfolios offered by Garry de la Ree in 1976 have been sold out. He is now offering a combined edition of the first and second series in a 500 copy edition, for \$10.50 postpaid (except foreign customers please add 50¢). The combined portfolio contains all the original plates--22 of them, on high quality textured white stock, each 11" x 14".

I used one of these as a cover last issue (and may use another this issue if the three covers ordered from others do not arrive in time).

The address: Gerry de la Ree
7 Cedarwood Lane
Saddle River, NJ
07458

By the way, I paid for the right to use the plate for a cover, and this portfolio is copyrighted, so do not feel free to use these lovely nudes without permission.

THE HOWARD REVIEW #5 is available, dated November, 1976. This issue contains some interesting rejection slips from major publishers, of some Howard stories and poems. A discussion of Solomon Kane by Byron Roark. A reprinting of a Howard story: "The Noseless Horror."

\$1.50 from Dennis McHaney
3970 Carter

Memphis, TN 38122

Booklet format, good artwork,
36 pages, offset.

THE SCIENCE-FICTION COLLECTOR #3 was sent. 48-pages, full-page size, newsprint, offset. \$1.25. This mag is primarily bibliographic, with indexes and comments on the Galaxy s-f novels, Health Knowledge pulp mags (BIZARRE FANTASY TALES, FAMOUS SCIENCE FICTION, MAGAZINE OF HORROR, STARTLING MYSTERY STORIES, WEIRD TERROR TALES...), with a Recommended Reading department by J Grant Thiesen.

Bi-monthly, from J. Grant Thiesen, 943 Maplecroft Road S.E., Calgary, Alberta, CANADA T2J 1W9.

A copy of CTHULHU CALLS (Jan. 1977 issue) crawled into my P.O. box. It contains the winners and losers of their sf poetry contest. Now I know why poetry is a dying art. I found mostly typographical tricks, free verse and cliches.

Booklet format, offset, no price I could find. Part of the scholastic welfare press, I guess, from Terry L. Schorb, Northwest Community College, Powell, WY 82435

Brian Mooney, editor of THE BRITISH FANTASY SOCIETY BULLETIN, has committed the cardinal blunder of fanzine editors: he tried to get too much material into the issue and reduced the type size to agate or nearly so. I refuse to squint and puzzle over such faint print. This is the Jan-Feb 1977 issue.

With the BULLETIN he sent along a copy of BODOMAN OF SOR, a humorous satire of the GOR novels, by Norma N. Johns. Very nice illustrations and cover by Russ Nicholson. But, again, the text has been reduced to the point of reader-resistance, and so this reader only peered and muttered his way through a few short sections. Good writing.

Booklet, offset, good paper, 40p (\$1.00) from (in USA) Jonathan Bacon, Box 147, Lamoni, IA 50140.

Or Brian Mooney, 447A, Porters Avenue, Dagenham, Essex, RM9 4ND, U.K.

Willis Conover sent a copy of a curiosity he has published (mostly for the subscribers to his SCI-FI-FANTASY CORRESPONDENT). It is full-page size, 8 pages, saddle-stapled, and titled THE OLD GENT. It purports to be an exchange of letters from an old fan and an old writer long thought dead. I am requested not to tell the name of the writer. Willis is asking \$2.50 per copy with 35¢ added, please for postage. Add \$1.00 for foreign airmail service.

THE FANTASY BOOK #1, Summer 1976, is \$1., 40 pages of tabloid-format newsprint. It is a picture-story "book" titled "The Shadow In the Starstone." The artwork is what might be termed Sincere Amateur, and tells of Hastur, Prince of the Black Stars in the fabled city of Carcosa and of the series of evils he fights. Based on Chambers' THE KING IN YELLOW.

Editor Mark Lamberti, of Octopus Publications, asks \$1. by mail, while asking 75¢ on the newsstand. ('the extra is for postage & envelope, don't you see?')

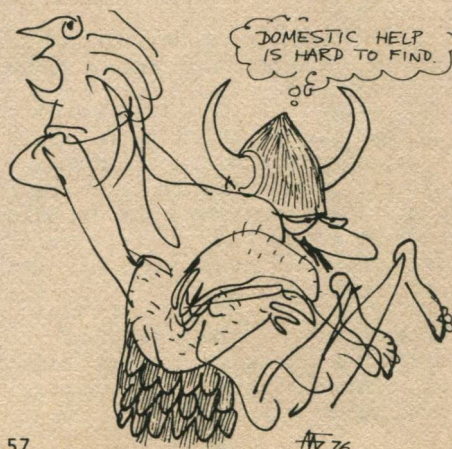
Nope, I don't see. They want to make a full 75¢ profit off the mail order, while being content with maybe 45¢ from the bookstore or newsstand sale. (They have to let the dealer keep at least 40% of the 75¢, after all.)

A copy can be had from Octopus Publications, Box 34305, Dallas, TX 75234.

PHANTASY DIGEST #2, edited by Wayne Warfield, is one of the best of the fantasy-oriented fan magazines. This issue impressed me with the interview with John Jakes, and the very good sword & sorcery novellette "Mirror of Wizardry" by John Jakes. That's a top-notch S&S yarn.

PHANTASY DIGEST is in the booklet format, offset, typeset, \$4. per copy, which seems rather high.

From: Hall Publications
Perryville, MD 21903.



BOOKS RECEIVED

NINE PRINCES IN AMBER

By Roger Zelazny

Avon 27664, \$1.25

'All other worlds are in darkness. Only one is real--Amber, the perfect realm.'

'Now hideous and alien forces rise up against its rulers. Only one can save Amber--Corwin, the uncrowned prince.'

'Long exiled to the Shadow Earth, Corwin has returned to seize his throne. Yet his bloody path is blocked and guarded by eerie structures beyond imagining...impossible realities forged by demonic assassins...and staggering horrors to challenge the might of Corwin's super-human fury.'

COMMENT: The first, and best, of the Amber series.

"FREE SOCIETIES" ARE USUALLY DREAMS IN WHICH THE DREAMER HOPES TO BE ABLE TO ESCAPE THE SIMPLE PRICES REQUIRED TO LIVE HAPPILY IN THE REAL WORLD.

---Harry Browne, HOW I FOUND FREEDOM IN AN UNFREE WORLD.

THE CRYSTAL SHIP

Edited by Robert Silverberg

Thomas Nelson Inc., \$7.95

Introduction by Robert Silverberg.

THE CRYSTAL SHIP by Joan D. Vinge.

MEGAN'S WORLD by Marta Randall.
SCREWTOP by Vonda McIntyre.

COMMENT: Three original s-f novellas and all of them good to excellent.

All with strong female lead characters. None of them stridently anti-man or 'relevant'.

THE CRYSTAL SHIP was slow going for a while---too much internal stewing for my reading taste---but it has a powerful ending. Decadent colonists dying off on an alien planet, and how one of the drugged survivors came to terms with reality.

MEGAN'S WORLD is a strong greedy-men-try-to-rape-a-planet story with very well done natives and culture of a feline variety. Megan--a renege human super-bionic woman is something special.

SCREWTOP is a work prison in a remote, sweltering area of a red sun planet. A tough-minded woman and her two men/companions try to stay alive. Engrossing and real. But---a flaw as sf---it is a translation at heart. It could have as easily been set in a sweltering work prison on Earth, now, for all the difference it would have made to the story.

MONOLOG CONTINUED ON PAGE 60

NOISE LEVEL

a column

john brunner

OMIGAWD. THE MEDDLING MORON STRIKES AGAIN!

Today I should be hard at work on my current novel. I've tried. I can't make it. Because yesterday's post brought in the Ballantine paperback, THE BEST OF PHILIP K. DICK, to which I contributed an introduction. I greatly enjoyed re-reading vast quantities of Phil's work for the purposes of this project. I regarded it, additionally, as something of a privilege to be invited to join the roster of distinguished contributors who have previously presented THE BEST OF so many of my own favorite authors. Precisely for that reason I found the assignment a very tough one. I had to work to my own highest standard if I was to prove worthy of inclusion in such company, and - of course - if I was to produce a text fit to lie between covers with such a galaxy of first-rate stories. I tried my damndest. When I turned in the preliminary draft Judy-Lynn del Rey told me in no uncertain terms that I hadn't made it. I was furious, but that's an editor I have a lot of respect for, so I started over dutifully and on the second try I received various plaudits that assured me the job had been worth doing twice. Hooray.

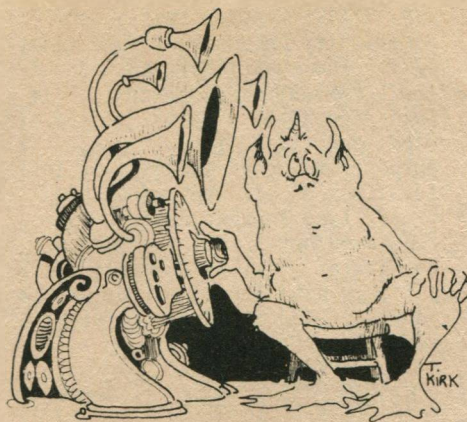
A MENTAL GLYTCH AND A PROOFREADING BOGGLE WILL BRING A CARD FROM JOHN BRUNNER....

28 Feb 77

'R.E.G.:

Please copy this one right! Please - please! In my last column I wrote "a five minute spat with Marjorie" and you left the noun out. I know it's rare; it is, however, a good respectable word dating back for centuries, and for someone who's currently raising sand about the way he's treated by editors a mess-up of that order is embarrassing....!

'But thanks a million anyhow. Because if I didn't have a channel to vent my spleen, I could go mad. I sometimes think I am already...'



Now I've got the actual printed version. I also have high blood-pressure again. I know - I've been back to my original to confirm the fact - that I do not punctuate like a backward school-kid. I can tell a colon's function from a semi-colon's. I know when what's needed is a period (anglicé full stop) because I've reached the end of a sentence or its elliptical or aposiopetic counterpart, and when a comma would be more suitable. Further, I have on my shelves, and use, reference works like the COLLINS AUTHORS AND PRINTERS DICTIONARY from the Oxford University Press, and FOWLER'S MODERN ENGLISH USAGE and Follett's MODERN AMERICAN USAGE and - and so forth. My collection of specifically lexicographical reference-books occupies about two metres of shelf-space - six and a half feet.

To discover, as I've just done, that my carefully-crafted prose has been worked over by an idiot, is more than my already tattered nerves can stand. Because when I say "worked over" I mean it in the sense of being thrown to the ground and repeatedly kicked at all points between the teeth and the balls, or other gonads according to gender.

I am not happy, believe me. To-day I am not at all a happy man.

Am I beefing because part of what I wrote has been cut out altogether? I am not; for once the deletion was relatively harmless (although I was surprised by it, since I wrote the piece to a slightly shorter length than the limit specified in my commission) and the elision of a mere flourish - a reference to THE FAIRY CHESSMEN and the fact that its size rather than its quality must account for its non-appearance in THE BEST OF HENRY KUTTNER - does not materially affect my argument. This, on the other hand, does.

I wrote the following passage:

"There is in literature a constellation of techniques characterised by reductio ad absurdum, gigantism, extremeness, exaggeration and incongruity. Very roughly this corresponds to what in the art world is termed surrealism."

Look at the book, and you will read this instead:

"There is in literature a constellation of techniques characterized by reductio ad absurdum: gigantism, extremeness, exaggeration, and incongruity. Roughly, all these correspond to what in the art world is termed 'surrealism.'"

But I didn't say that. (And who in his/her right mind would want to?) I was setting parameters for a group that includes, as one factor among five, reductio ad absurdum. The fugghead who changed it presumably doesn't know what the latter term means and was too lazy to reach for a dictionary - or the style manual that might have informed him/her concerning the use of colons.

Or, come to that, the basic grammar which would have explained why I wrote, a line or two lower down, "Science fiction has used these techniques" because that is what I meant, and why it introduced a gratuitous error to alter that "has" to read "had".

Further down the page still, you will find the following abomination:

"But, since time immemorial, people have been trying to get their heads straight - to fight free of those fixed perceptual sets to which we have grown so accustomed. They cast shadows from the past, from memory, across what we imagine ourselves to be perceiving in what is currently taking its turn to serve as 'present time'."

Once more this is neither what I said, nor what I meant, nor what I meant to say. (Lewis Carroll, art thou sleeping there below?) Here's what I set down on the page:

"But since time immemorial, to corn a phrase, people have been trying to 'get their heads straight', or in more formal terminology to fight free of those fixed perceptual sets to which we have grown imperceptibly so accustomed that they cast shadows from the past, from memory, across what we imagine ourselves to be perceiving in what is currently taking its turn to serve as 'present time'."

MM, evidently, is unacquainted with

paradox as a literary device...

It would break my heart, as well as driving up my blood-pressure, to try and count the number of times the Meddling Moron has interfered with what I spent so long on, and went to so much trouble over. But here are a handful of further samples.

I wrote par excellence, and underlined it for italicisation because it's not English yet. (Not even American English, so far as my US dictionaries can tell me.) MM has had it set in roman. I wrote "uncared-for"; MM took out the hyphen. Same with "side-effects" - but that could be classed as a matter of taste, whereas the former is (in my own view) an outright error. Still, I'd prefer to pick elephants and not nits...

I wrote "en route", italicised as a French term; it seems that MM believes in a word "enroute". My US dictionaries disagree, and so do both my French dictionaries, but I confess I do not own the RANDOM HOUSE DICTIONARY, which may now constitute the Ballantine standard.

I wrote: "Last month were published umpteen novels which..." MM turned it into: "Last month umpteen novels were published which..." Seemingly MM is also ignorant of the device known as emphatic apposition, which is what I decided to employ for the effect I needed. (It isn't all that rare; indeed, it has several names. That's just the one I find most apt.)

I don't want to drag this out indefinitely, so let me pick on one final "correction" which especially well exemplifies the incredible dim-wittedness of the species Meddling Moron. I referred to a memorable exchange between two of Phil Dick's characters in which it's made clear that God really is dead, for his (more precisely its) corpse has been found drifting in space. And I went on to remark: "But inside the story that is not what you would call important."

MM, upon whom be plagues and murders, inserted between "that" and "is" the superfluous - extraneous - uncalled for - bloody stupid extra word "statement"...

That is not what I said. It is not what I meant to say. It is not what I had in mind - that mind which the Meddling Moron pretends to be able to read with greater accuracy than I myself can manage. It is far more nearly a contradiction of what I said.

The fact that the statement is of no importance within the story

is neither here nor there. What I am drawing attention to is not what someone is saying in passing. It is that in the universe of the story the death of God is not important.

And that isn't a statement. It's an event.

Who is it (I hear you wondering) who is allowed to muck about with the work of established writers in this intolerable fashion?

Well, like all evil spirits the Meddling Moron has a True Name, and in this case it happens to be Legion, so I can't pin the blame for what's been done to this bit of work on a person you can identify and call up on my behalf. I've never (so far as I'm aware) met him or her, and I sincerely hope I never shall.

Sudden awful thought: do I really mean him/her? Ought I not rather to say it - a badly-programmed computer, a golem with brains as well as feet of clay, or a descendant of the tame marmoset that used to alter the endings of the stories Horace Gold published in GALAXY?

Someone tell me if I'm right. I have scruples about dismantling a real live person without anaesthetic. But if I'm actually dealing with a machine, I have in the barn a Swedish woodsman's axe which would admirably impress on it how much it has upset me...

More seriously: thanks to long and often bitter experience I can at least sketch you a word-portrait of the Meddling Moron. The type M: is in his/her early twenties and recently graduated from college labouring - like most people "educated" according to the present system - under a whole mass of interlocked misapprehensions. Thanks to them, he/she regards working in a publisher's office, at what he/she considers to be boring and menial tasks beneath his/her dignity, as serving solely to pass the time until his/her real worth is recognised.

Among those misapprehensions perhaps the worst is the notion that a sufficiency of credits in courses like English Literature 1879-1880 and Creative (save the mark) Writing automatically authorises MM to contradict and correct people who have written more books than MM has celebrated birthdays.

A close runner-up - indeed a corollary - is MM's firm conviction that he/she knows the entire vocabulary of English, and therefore the purpose of a dictionary is to lie on its side and stop other books falling over. Faced with "causal" MM will instantly substitute "casual";

faced with "caudal", "causal"; faced with "divers", MM will add a terminal -e regardless of the context, and faced with "context" will like as not change it to "contest". Faced with "exorbitant" MM will overlook its connection with orbits and think about exhorting... or possibly assume a link with horticulture. Either way, he/she can be relied on to throw in an "h". Dropped by some passing Cockney, possibly?

As for what happens when an author dares to write a coherent sentence more than twenty words long, that beggars description. MM will segment it come what may and heedless of whether the result makes sense. Woe betide anybody so rash as to imagine that possession of a use-vocabulary rather larger than the late Sir Winston Churchill's entitles you to immunity from the depredations of MM!

Because it doesn't.

I used to imagine that the MM worked for publishers of - how shall I phrase this? - an unashamedly commercial bent: firms with minimum literary pretensions. But this is a book from Ballantine! The MM's baneful influence must be spreading epidemically!

That implies that whenever I refer to the Texas deck of one of the Mississippi steamboats which figure largely in my current novel, I shall have to add "sic" in the margin. Because if I don't, I shall surely find when I receive galley-proofs that MM will have altered Texas to Texas, as though it had something to do with the Lone Star State, and then I shall have to make it all right again, restoring it to the way it was when it left my desk -

Hang on. Wait a moment. I don't even dare use "sic". If I do, MM is likely to read the word as "texassic", and - jumping to the usual conclusion that the author knows English less well than MM does - make it over into "Jurassic", as being the nearest term recalled from those college courses in which MM acquired all the glorious credits which now entitle him/her to tamper with the fruit of a quarter-century's hard work in a tough profession...

No! No, I simply won't put up with it. MEDDLING MORON, BE WARNED! From now on every typescript that I wrap and mail will be impermeate with a geas concocted expressis verbis and choris skordha - not to mention malice aforethought - to ensure (no, not insure; ensure) the extra-

vasation of your species's (not your species') ichor. Or, to put it another way, if you lay your interfering paws on anything else I've struggled to make exactly right, you will burst out in blebs and blains and buboes and I shan't be in the least degree regretful.

So be it! Sic fiat (which is not a car due for repair). I have spoken.

MONOLOG CONTINUED FROM PAGE 57

3-19-77 I'm getting the ominous impression that maybe even 80 pages may not be enough for all my words and all these books and magazines. It'll HAVE to be, because the mechanics are treading on my capacity.

I haven't got but four or five pages of this issue pasted up yet, and that will be a long job... Well, I never promised you a rose garden. There may be further adjustments.

John Brunner sent a column yesterday, and it should be in this issue, too.

I keep having these thoughts... Like I've been wondering why for the last year inflation hasn't been more intense, with all those federal deficits mounting up and up... Today I think I know part of the answer: as in the fifties, this country has been exporting its inflation. In this instance the megabanks have been sending a hundred billion dollars or so overseas as loans. If that money had been invested in this country it would have generated 10-15% inflation. NOW the banks are loaned up to the hilt overseas (and worried sick that most of those loans are going to be reneged upon by the countries who borrowed it) and now business and borrowing in this country is just beginning to get hyper...and soon interest rates will start to skyrocket.

There is a move, now, to build up the International Monetary Fund into a super-bank for the world so it can take the load off the big banks, in loaning the Less-Developed Countries the money they need for oil payments. Who is supposed to pour in those assets the IMF is going to loan out? The relatively healthy industrialized countries (USA, GERMANY, JAPAN...) plus Saudi Arabia and other oil-rich sand dune places.

Thus I see this scenario: The IMF (controlled by [who else?]) the Rockefeller power locus) will lend its money to the debtor countries so they can pay the banks back. (CitiBank, the huge 40 billion dollar Rockefeller NY bank, is 80% into foreign loans.) Thus those vulnerable banks will be saved by the IMF which will assume all or most of those monstrous bad debts. Since the USA will fund the IMF with deficit billions, the

USA taxpayer will be footing the bill by way of inflation and more inflation again, as always. [I do not expect the Saudi's to put any significant amount of money into the IMF: they are not fools. Nor are the Japanese or the West Germans.] The whole affair will be just another massive ripoff of the American people, and they won't even know what's going on, went on, and will go on.

All this to keep the stupendous debt structure upright just...one...or...two...more...years....

NEWSLETTER FROM DONN VICHA

20 February 1977

'The magazine MEDIASCENE #22 is worthy of note in SFR. While it is a great hype for Jim Steranko's commodities outlet, this particular issue deals with Science Fiction Spectaculars: mainly, STAR WARS and WIZARDS.

'Let me briefly mention some highlights and previews, so to speak, after mentioning that Steranko's proofreaders should be shot if they can be found. Misspelling of authors' names, producers', and just too many words!

'The story boards for STAR WARS included in MEDIASCENE #22 are impressive; Ralph McQuarrie is an unknown to me so if he is not already a highly regarded sf artist, he will be, soon.

'The novelization of STAR WARS, reviewed in SFR, betrays the movie to be another special effects presentation, but brought to us by a great number of the same people who gave us 2001. The reviewer of STAR WARS rapped the dogfight concept but he ain't seen it yet. "Computer controlled stop-motion animation" is hopefully more than just jargon. I never saw DARK STAR, but the scenic designer of that flick is on hand, as well as the costume designer, production designer, and one of the special effects supervisors of 2001.

'Six years of producer George Lucas' life and seven million dollars go into STAR WARS to be released this spring.

'WIZARDS is now in release and is a Ralph Bakshi/20th Century production, a full-length animation epic with the likes of comic artists Mike Ploog, Gray Morrow, and Jim Starlin as designers. Don't expect to see a great deal of individual styles, according to MEDIASCENE, but there is supposedly an unevenness at times in the strength and power of the characters which may be due to individual styles (this contradiction brought to you by MEDIASCENE's writer, not me). It's a sword &

sorcery epic, not at all like the FRITZ THE CAT or COONSKIN of Bakshi's past.

'MEDIASCENE also reports that Rankin-Bass will be producing THE HOBBIT for the tube in the fall. WATERSHIP DOWN is being produced in England. Hence, WIZARDS' release will measure the audiences for future animation products. The b&w stills included in MEDIASCENE indicate something more detailed and expansive than Bakshi's previous works.

'Sf is really coming into another movie phase and it could very well be here to stay since the publishing industry is becoming the testing ground for filmmakers.

'We don't need to rush out and see every one of them if this is true. I know I'll find it hard not to "support your local sf movie" but after seeing LOGAN'S RUN and KING KONG, I realize I put my money into the wrong hands.

'I wish there was something all of us could do to save DUNE which has stopped production due to economics. Orson Welles and Salvatore Dali were/are pivotal characters, and the director/producer Andro Jodorowsky has the bizarre kind of imagination to work well within the framework of Herbert's classic. Maybe, with CHILDREN OF DUNE standing with the regular bestsellers as well as among the sf titles, Frank may be able to keep DUNE alive and in capable hands.

'Another notable sf movie in the works is Steven Spielberg's CLOSE ENCOUNTER OF THE THIRD KIND. Maybe JAWS wasn't so great after all, but Spielberg's got independence no director has ever had and he's one man dissatisfied with sf fare of the past and is now able to do something about it. Richard Drefuss (another JAWS alum) and French director Francois Truffaut star as well as Douglas Trumbull's special effects.

'These are all up and coming: DAMNATION RUN (Zelazny wasn't mentioned as screen writer) has Jack Smight directing (ILLUSTRATED MAN to his credit/discredit) with George Peppard and Jan Michael Vincent. Vincent has been the sensation of many drive-in-movies type fare, however, the critics in Chicago say they're among the best B-movies made. I'll have a very hard time avoiding this one and I wish the producers appreciate that Zelazny's name will help the movie. (But I fear the movie will discourage new sf readers.)

'THE MICRONAUTS is a Harry Saltzman project, so James Bond quality production values will most likely prevail. The big question about this movie lies in the split of the Saltzman/Broccoli team responsible



for the James Bond flicks. They've fallen out over production values, so it may be.... aw! the director hails from THE POSEIDON ADVENTURE, so why bother to go on?

'STAR TREK from Paramount.

'WHO GOES THERE by John Campbell upon which THE THING was based (remember the debut of James Arness as the spooky carrot?) is supposed to be a hot property, as well as ALAS, BABYLON, CLOUD ON SILVER, CHILDHOOD'S END, and BRAVE NEW WORLD. Whether they'll see production, let alone decent production, isn't within anyone's scope as yet.

'There are a lot of flicks coming out, not just in production and prone to waylaying. As I wrote before, according to PUBLISHERS WEEKLY, close to \$100 million is being spent on sf films. Let's hope that KING KONG didn't represent a quarter of that, and for a change, let's be choosy despite the temptation to go to every one of them. And despite the claim: "I'd rather see a bad sf flick than a good cop show." Cops are cheap flicks compared with sf material. And even big money guarantees nothing, KING KONG being the ultimate case of vagrancy---I mean, where did the money go? Half of me says the big budget was hype, the other half wishes desperately that it was because KONG was a vacuous "extravaganza" that denigrates comic books with comparison.'

I follow that newsy/opinion letter with one of opinion/judgement. A LETTER FROM CAIN SMITH:

Mid-March, 1977

'"A commentator in LOCUS purported to find a whole paragraph of fantasy in "The Barrow"' Darrell Schweitzer says in SFR 20. As that commentator, I wish to purport that the fantasy element is present in the story as published in ORSINIAN TALES; just as it was in the magazine appearance. The protagonist performs

a magic rite (or an act of worship with a specific request to a god in mind). The magic rite works. I consider that to be fantasy. Perhaps the Ursula LeGuin it isn't. One never knows unless the author speaks.

'Belated appreciation of your writeup in SFR 19 of my article in NEW LIBERTARIAN WEEKLY Sept. 19th. Particularly since I cannot reread it without the urge to run it through at least one more draft. There are too many awkward sentences, and too many awkward thoughts.

'I must disagree with your explanation of why so high a proportion of sf seems to be written by people who don't believe in their settings, characters or stories. Burnout or avoidance of burnout may account for some of it, yes. (Just as it must account for many of the mystery stories which seem to be written by people who don't believe in death or policemen.) But I maintain that many writers don't try for realistic fiction about the future because they consider it neither possible nor worth doing if it were possible.

'To write realistic future scene fiction, requires to begin with believing that it is possible to write realistic fiction AT ALL.'

((I don't mean truthful fiction, but realistic; the illusion of reality, using detail and naturalism to create the sense of intense plausibility. I am speaking of technique and I think you are speaking of a kind of bottom line philosophy and/or metaphysics.))

'James Blish and the Panshins have stated that all fiction is "really" about the inside of the author's skull. (This axiom seems to have been imported from highbrow fiction set in the present. Oddly enough, the mainstream novel seems to have done best when it was beneath the notice of highbrow critics.)

'Believing that it is possible to write realistic fiction, one then has to consider it possible to write such fiction set in the future. De Camp's SCIENCE FICTION HANDBOOK states flat out that it isn't. (I recommended that book in my article, and now regret it for that reason. Instead, I would tout Heinlein's contribution to OF WORLDS BEYOND and his essay in THE SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL.) If it hasn't happened yet, you may write plausible fantasy about it. But it can only be fantasy, says de Camp.

'And then you must consider the future to be different from past and present. I note from the interview with Philip K. Dick in SFR 19 that at least one sf writer sees no difference among the three.

'After all that, of course, the author must feel that it's worth putting in the effort to come up with future he can believe in. A writer need not be lazy to decide this is needless labor. Joe Haldeman says, right in SFR 20, that he didn't believe one of THE FOREVER WAR's essential premises. Haldeman isn't lazy, from his description of his working methods.

'The comparatively few writers who get this far then have to face burnout, as you suggest. They also have to face other discomforts. (For instance, there's much evidence that one generation's liberalism is the next generation's conservatism---and a third generation's radical reactionism. As a liberal, I find it uncomfortable to make the obvious extrapolations. It can't be very comfortable for conservatives, either.)

'It doesn't help that there seems to be not one editor in the field who particularly wants realistic fiction set in the future.

'On to another matter. We seem to be the two leading reviewers of prozines by default. No one else reviews them. William Atheling, Jr. gave up in favor of book reviewing well before he died with James Blish---at least to judge by MORE ISSUES AT HAND. I suppose that book reviewing has more prestige because books are Literature while magazines (and pulps at that) are throwaways---like Kleenex. And reviewers go where the prestige is.'

Most everybody in any profession goes where the prestige is---and the money.

3-25-77 I watched and listened with amazement last night as NBC News presented the story of the five "Moonie" adults who were turned over to their parents for 30 days for 'deprogramming'.

The judge decided after a 12-day "trial" that these people had been brainwashed to the point that they were willing to stand for hours on the street selling flowers to raise money they never saw again.

The judge and the news service added 'young' to 'adults' in justifying this action. Presumably if the adults had been 65 years old, and the parents in their eighties, no action would have been taken...or even considered.

No commentator I've heard or read has yet brought up the most basic issue in this case: here the State is asserting its "right" to treat legal adults as children and to do with them as it wishes.

Just like the Russian state asserts its "right" to put political dissidents into mental institutions for its attempt at 'deprogramming'.

Thus unAmerican religion thinking is on a par with unRussian thinking...and treated the same way.

Will the courts now send young monks and nuns back to their parents (on the appeal of the parents) for de-brainwashing? Will The courts now forbid the Jehovah's Witnesses from giving their time and money to their church? Will any 'irrational' donation of time and money and any life-time dedication to any organization be declared the result of ruthless manipulation of impressionable, suggestible minds...and will it be asserted that the State has the right to alter that unwanted condition of mind by ordering mental conditioning or "reorientation"?

The judge in this "Moonie" case knew he was on slippery constitutional ground, so he urged the "defendants'" lawyer to appeal. He will.

I wonder if the ACLU will have an opinion on this?

I wonder if President Carter will have a thought?

This case (and the Statist, collectivist thinking behind it) is the latest surfacing of the theory that the State owns all its citizens. And this is the latest chipping away of the legal and moral and intellectual status of the free adult, the free person, in this country.

I note that Henry Kissinger is being further rewarded by the Rockefellers: Henry has been named Chairman of the Rockefellers' Chase Manhattan Bank international advisory committee.

Ahh, it was heartwarming the way Carter was so pleased with the great success of his Vietnam commission. And now, swiftly, swiftly, there will be resumed talks in Paris aimed at 'normalization' of relations between our former enemy and ourselves. Oh, yes, they will talk trade relations. And, oh yes, the way will be opened for Standard Oil and Exxon to get some juicy off-shore drilling rights... Because, horrors!, a few months ago some upstart European oil companies have gotten in ahead of the Rockefeller companies and something had to be done! It was--a hastily assembled "commission" was sent over with great fanfare to show how nice and cooperative the Vietnamese are now...and let's put it all behind us now, and forgive.... Being mad at the Vietnamese communists no longer serves the purposes of the rulers of this country.

I must admit some uneasiness in this Rockefeller "fixation" I seem to have... I ask myself, do they

really control the government to this extent? It sounds paranoid... crazy...and yet, once you are aware of the relationships, the linkages between the men who are "picked" for the key government policy-making jobs and the Rockefeller power locus, once you start noting who benefits from policy, and begin to see a pattern and an underlying policy, and observe how it works, and who makes it work, and... Once this happens you are led to note that certain stories are not used or followed up in the major media, and how certain issues and trends are "pushed" and how certain men and organizations are smeared... And you read more and look in corners more... You note little tag-end clues that cannot be hidden... And here you are.

MUST BE BATHTUB GIN,
IT LEFT A RING IN THE
GLASS.



3-28-77 I have an important note here from HARLAN ELLISON:
19 March, 1977

'Sorry it's taken so long to reply to yours of x months ago, but I'm busy writing pilot script for NBC of "A Boy and His Dog" which they want as a Jan. tv series replacement. THE LAST DANGEROUS VISIONS will go in to Harper & Row next month and should be on their late Fall or Xmas list, if all goes well.'

Rejoice all ye who have been waiting for lo these many years, your wait shall be ended soon, we hope. I have a sneaking hunch that the unpublished three-foot ms. of THE LAST DANGEROUS VISIONS is all that is keeping Harlan alive, somehow, and that when the first copy comes off the press, like the grandfather clock, Harlan will stop ticking.... No, no, he has simply gotten a monstrous monkey off his back, and mind.

Jon Gustafson, editor-of-art of NEW VENTURE, and lately an art-
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critic columnist for SFR, sends word that he is writing a section on sf artists for Peter Nicholls in England. Peter is putting together a 600,000 word sf encyclopedia.

"HE SAYS HIS LUST IS IN HIS HEART. I
HOPE IT'S A LOT LOWER."
---SHIRLEY MACLAINE

And I'd better get into print this LETTER FROM FREFF which has been languishing out of sight (and mind) for too long.

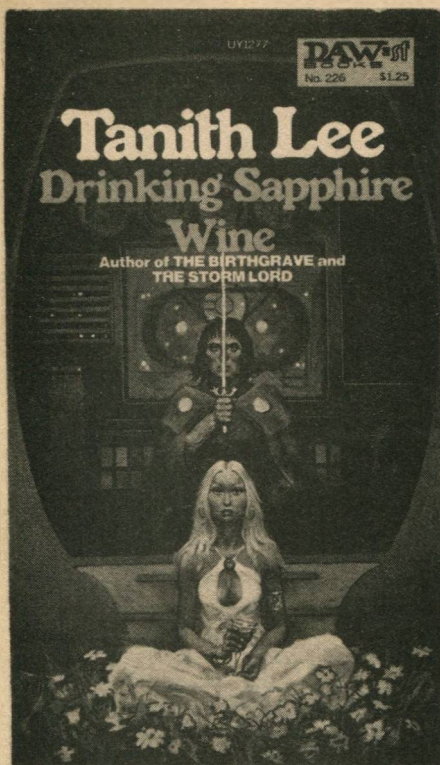
1/29/77

'Yet another SFR format/structure change? Ah, ceaseless experimentation. Fine by me, for two reasons. One is that I am definitely out of the mainstream down here, so that filling a column twice a year with nice thick information stew wouldn't have been easy. The other is that I would like to see just what kind of critical taste you've got for covers; make sure you comment fairly often, okay?'

((If it didn't cost so damned much to have screened, reduced stats made of covers I'd comment more; it seems unfair to all to comment on a cover and not reproduce it for the reader's understanding.))

'Somebody who should be mentioned here, by the name of Doug Maitz. A while back in "The Gimlet Eye" Jon sliced a cover Maitz did for de Camp's THE VIRGIN & THE WHEELS, for a variety of reasons, all of which I have come to believe were invalid. The painting was a well-done bad parody of Frazetta, which suited the story it illustrated---since that was a well-done bad parody of S&S. The realm of the WDBP is a thin one. Offhand some Monty Python, NATIONAL LAMPOON and EL GRANDE DE COCA-COLA come to mind as living there. Ah yes, also BULLSHOT CRUMMOND. Maitz did the painting that way because it was true to the book. More recently he has had an excellent cover on the pb of FLASHING SWORDS #3, and a cover for Tanith Lee's DRINKING SAPPHIRE WINE that was so close to perfect that it hurts me very much. What blew things were the actual features of the man and woman on the cover, which were wrong. Sigh. But close. Though currently very derivative of several sources---Krenkel, Jones, Frazetta---I do believe that Maitz will be a name to watch. His oil technique is very good.'

Okay. I have reproduced the cover below. My impression of it is one of good composition and balance, but it's too static. There are no dynamics...and the drawing is too comic-bookish.



SMALL PRESS REVIEWS

UNEARTH #2, Spring 1977. \$1.00.
Suite 190, 102 Charles St., Boston,
MA 02114.

COMMENT: This second issue is marred slightly by a printing or editorial miscalculation: the cover is too dark and purplish; it obscures the featured names and items.

The stories are no longer puffed as to length category, and they are short but good. All are smooth and of professional mein, and all are interesting.

"Man in Vacuum" by Chris Dornan is too good to end with a pun. And scheduling "Tachyon Rag" by Timothy R. Sullivan, with its gag ending to follow struck me as bad editing.

The reprint, "Proof", by Hal Clement, was too stuffy and science lecturish for me. I couldn't finish it.

On the other hand, Hal Clement's science column is right now the best being published. His discussion of genetic engineering---trying to make a human who could breathe sea water and survive in the depths---was conversational and fascinating. He does this very, very well.

"Nocturne" by David Frieze is a really tough story---uncompromising and sweetly written.

"Garden Gate" by Sterling Taylor is captivating, honest sword & sorcery. I'd like to read about Donnoh and his magic, protective medallion again.

"The Symbol Hunter" by Keith L. Justice is a strange "story" indeed,

being unclassifiable quasi-fiction, mockery, disappointment, courage and revenge. Don't anybody ever say I don't like experimental fiction. This one I liked!

There are good, though short book review and film review departments. I think the department illo headings are too muddy and goopy, but the story illos are of good quality and variety; good editorial mind at work.

Jonathan Ostrowsky-Lantz and John M. Landsberg are the editors.

John DiPrete sent along a copy of his quarterly magazine, BLACK LITE #3, for review. \$1.25 for a copy, letter-size, offset, heavy cover, 36 pages.

Darrell Schweitzer has a short story in this issue. I started to read it and snirkled when I came to these lines:

"The Mandate of Heaven has passed from Han, and settled on no one in particular," said Tseng Yuan-li. "Hence there is great turmoil in the sky, as there is on earth. In addition to that it looks like it is going to rain. We had better seek shelter."

'Blessed Lotus moaned softly.'

And:

'He pushed on as fast as he dared, considering the state of the maid, and all the while fearing that they would be stricken by lightning before they reached safety.'

'stricken' seems in the wrong tense, somehow...

There is a sincere-amateur picture story, "Starlorn," scripted by John DiPrete with art by Gene Day's Shadow Studio.

There are book reviews, movie reviews, letters.

BLACK LITE is a semi-pro comic-art fandom magazine, primarily.

The New England Science Fiction Association, Inc. publishes a specialized book now and then. Their newest is VIEWPOINT by Ben Bova.

It is a selection from his ANALOG editorials and it has an introductory article by Bova titled, "Inside Analog or How I Learned To Stop Worrying and Love My Job." It is an inside look at how ANALOG is run, and it is the best part of the book.

The book is of limited edition: 800 regular hardbound and 15 fine-bound copies. \$10. for a regular copy, \$43. for a finebound. I am not sure what 'finebound' means.

Send to NESFA, Box G, MIT Branch P.O., Cambridge, MA 02139.

THE MANUAL OF INFLATION HEDGES AND OTHER MONEY SECRETS, by the editors of Inflation Survival Letter. \$9.95 from Kephart Communications, Inc., 901 N. Washington St., Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22314.

COMMENT: Letter-size, 70-page offset printed book on how to protect your money in the face of What Is Coming. There are eight articles on personal finance strategies, nine articles on speculations and unusual investments, and an Inflation Hedger's Directory.

If you've got 50,000 dollars or so and are a political and financial innocent, you should read this book. The article, "How Safe is Your Bank?" will turn your guts to ice.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ALICE

By Kirill Bulychiev, translated and adapted by Mirra Ginsburg. Illustrated by Igor Galanin. Macmillan, \$6.95

COMMENT: A well-made children's book, letter-size, hardbound, for ages 7-11.

About a little girl in the 21st century whose father is a zoo director. She gets into scrapes but puts things right in the end. She is friendly to aliens and solves scientific mysteries. Very good as-if-drawn-by-a-child full-page illustrations. Whatthehell, I liked it.

THE SWORD OF SHANNARA--An Epic Fantasy By Terry Brooks.

Random House, \$12.95
Ballantine, \$6.95 (Trade Paperback)

'Long ago the world of Shea Ohmsford was ruined by the wars of ancient Evil. Now mankind must compete for the Earth with many other races---gnomes, trolls, dwarfs and elves. But Shea, the half-human, half-elfin adopted son of an innkeeper, knows little of such troubles. Shady Vale, where he grew to manhood, seems a haven of peace.

'Then into Shady Vale comes the giant, forbidding figure of Allanon, possessed of strange knowledge and even stranger Druidic powers. To Shea, he reveals that the evil Warlock Lord, supposedly long dead, is once again plotting to destroy the world. Against this Power of Darkness the sole effective weapon is the Sword of Shannara, which can be used only by a true descendant of Jerle Shannara. Shea is the last living heir; on him rests the hope of all races! When Shea protests that he is no hero, the Druid states that he must reclaim the Sword. In the morning Allanon is gone, leaving behind a mysterious warning note.

'Soon a Skull Bearer, dread minion of the Warlock Lord, flies to

the Vale, seeking to destroy the last heir of Shannara. Rather than risk destruction for the Vale, Shea and his skeptical half-brother Flick flee, drawing the Skull Bearer after them. Allanon's cryptic orders have directed them to Culhaven, home of the dwarfs. Somehow they must go there to await him, despite the Skull Bearers and other unknown, dire perils. And beyond Culhaven, they must enter the ravaged Northland, where the Warlock Lords holds total dominion.

'Thus begins the seemingly hopeless quest of a simple man against the greatest power of evil the world has known. Valiant comrades join him against a host of foes and soul-wrenching dangers. Terrors and wonders increase as the overwhelming armies of the Warlock Lord move toward war. But in the end, Shea alone must confront the Lord of Evil without knowledge or hope to guide him.'

COMMENT: A handsome, thick book, with 726 pages, a map, and eight black and white full-page illustrations and a full-color fold-out painting by the Brothers Hildebrandt.

All concerned have high hopes that this epic novel will feed the ravening hungers of the Tolkien readers.

The special preview edition sent to reviewers has a letter from Lester del Rey (Random House letterhead) on the cover. He is signed as Fantasy Editor. He is very enthusiastic about the book.

I am not.

It certainly has all the elements of success---a rock-solid plot, very good fiction dynamics, symbolic appeal, good writing, good imagination.

So why did I quit, bored, unwilling to spend the time to finish it, even though I was two-thirds through?

I suspect it's a matter of taste. As mentioned elsewhere in this issue, I never did feel an attraction for Tolkien. I have never read a word of his books. (Maybe I'd love them!) But this novel... I found it too juvenile. The blurb above says Shea and Flick and the others are adults. They come across as boys, mostly. And this is a juvenile novel in appeal. There are no girls or women in this book. It is a boy gang adventure. Sex never rears its ugly head except symbolically.

[What is the magic sword but a symbol for a "magic" penis? And is the plot a story in which the Evil One (parent(s)) wish to deny Sex to the world (Boys), and the quest for the magic penis (adulthood, power, money) is a kind of masked revolt/wish-fantasy against the Dreaded, All-Powerful, Unfair Parents?]

And I found the writing rather dense, overwritten. Terry Brooks tends too often to explain the inner workings of minds too much when the action and dialogue show it and imply it. The novel has a great deal of redundancy, repetition, excess detail. He spends too much time on transitions from major event to major event.

The book could have been cut from about 250,000 words to maybe 225,000 or less, and improved considerably in the process.

The action/danger scenes are well done, and the power of the quest structure is always there. The beasts and dangers are vividly described. The Good Guys are distinct individuals, albeit familiar types. The Evil Ones are really rank.

Yet...I didn't finish the book. I didn't care enough. There was not enough promise of excitement and wonder (judging from the excitement and wonder to that point) to make me want to plow through all them words to reach the good parts. I began to skim...and then simply quit.

3-29-77 Peter Weston, editor of the ANDROMEDA anthology series, sent the proofs of my novelette, "One Immortal Man", which will appear in the second volume, due to be published in May...after about a year's wait since publication of the first ANDROMEDA.

I'm always astonished, when reading some fiction I've written, after a period of time, at how well I write! No, seriously, I've noticed this effect time and again. Maybe it is bedded in a sneaking inferiority complex that lurks in the center of my obvious egoism. Whatever, "One Immortal Man" will hold the reader and rock him a bit, at the end. And I got some good solid message painted on the walls of the action and dialogue. Not obtrusive. I'm proud of that story. It's the only "pure" sf I've ever written.

And about the only sf I'll ever write until I tire of SFR in a few more years, and either sell the mag or phase it out...or switch again to a personal journal operation which would give more free time. This is idle speculation in a way, and very premature.

About back issues of SFR and TAC: It seems that #12 is now sold out, and #7, 13, 11, 8 are in progressively less danger of extinction. Get them while you can if you want them.

I have decided NOT to reprint them. I can't afford it, and it would take too long to earn back, copy by copy, the initial printing bill. Then there's the matter of storage space. The basement walls are steadily creeping inward as it is, as each new issue leaves its residue of back issue copies.... Indeed, the truth is I must keep on publishing in order to work down the large quantities of back issues crowding the other section of the basement.

3-30-77 Interesting, revealing story in the WALL STREET JOURNAL today. The House Banking Committee approved legislation providing funds for international lending agencies after going along with the Carter administration and voting down a tough "human rights" requirement.

The committee okayed \$5.2 billion dollars over three years for the U.S. contribution to the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the African Development Bank. This would almost double the current level of U.S. contributions to these international lending agencies.

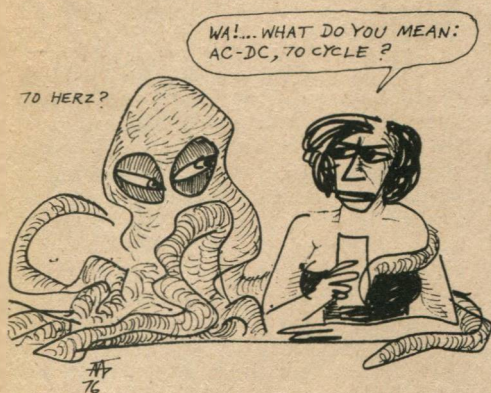
Briefly, this taxpayers' money will go to those countries so deeply in debt that they need loans no one else will give them in order to pay off and service their existing debt. Which means that our tax money is going to pay off bad loans made by the big (mostly American) banks. I told you so. Even so, it probably will not be enough. Chase Manhattan, Citibank, Citicorp and others are so deep into sour billion dollar loans they'll probably never be salvaged short of the most naked and outrageous "rescue" by the U.S. Treasury.

Equally of interest is that the Carter administration exerted pressure against a "human rights" requirement for the loans. Which means that Carter's bleeding heart is a bunch of public relations crap. Matters of principle and ideals cannot be allowed to interfere with sending billions where it'll do the Rockefellers the most good.

The Dow-Jones Industrial stock average plunged through its 924 'support level' today, dropping more than eleven points to around 920. This portends further selling, perhaps massive selling. The market seems to be saying the outlook ain't so good. I think I'll be in a position to say "I told you so!" as the economic ship of state sinks under my feet. I am one of several hundred million passengers. I suspect the Captain and his officers are about to abandon ship--first.

MONOLOG CONTINUED ON PAGE 70

OTHER VOICES



CASEY AGONISTES AND OTHER S.F. AND FANTASY STORIES

By Richard McKenna

Pan Books, London & Sydney,
Cavaye Place, London SW10,

9 PG. Nov. 1976, 160 pages, \$1.75.

Reviewed by W. Ritchie Benedict

My reaction to this collection of short stories, five in all, published between 1958 and 1967 by the late author of *THE SAND PEBBLES*, Richard McKenna, puzzles me. Except for the odd short story, I had never read this author.

Now I feel he must be looked at in a new light. It is as if Ernest Hemmingway had gone to Tibet and taken a course in mysticism and then began writing science-fiction.

I was least impressed by the title story, *Casey Agonistes*, which to my mind bore an odd resemblance to the novel and movie, *ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST*. McKenna was deeply into the subject of philosophy and it shows in all of his stories. *Hunter Come Home* concerns the effects a hunter-aggressor society on the ecology of a planet.

The Secret Place involves a gold hunter's relationship with a fantasy-prone girl which leads him into new ideas about the nature of reality.

Mine Own Ways concerns tribal rites and symbolism on an undeveloped planet that may have more impact on the lives of those technologically superior than they suspected when they first landed.

The final story, *Fiddler's Green*, is long, more of a novelette, and begins with the efforts of shipwrecked sailors adrift in a lifeboat without food or water to find a gateway into a co-existent world in time and space with the one they occupy and how that world comes to possess them and become exceedingly dangerous to their sanity. I could be mis-

taken, but I seem to recall that it was considered for a Hugo or Nebula award when it was first written.

This story appeared in *ORBIT 2*, edited by Damon Knight, who also writes the introduction to this book.

All of these stories can be read superficially or they can be analyzed for the deeper meanings the author intended. He was studying the science of "ontology", which is the investigation of the nature of reality, and felt that a science-fiction framework was the best way to convey the highly abstruse nature of these ideas in a form that could be understood. Of course, it may be argued that all science-fiction seeks to do this, but this collection was structured strictly for this purpose. It is a shame that McKenna, who died in 1964, did not live long enough to contribute more to the genre in which he showed a remarkable degree of adeptness.

This book won't be everyone's cup of tea, due to the somewhat disturbingly psychological undercurrents. It's a must for the "deep thinkers".

THE SHINING

By Stephen King

Doubleday, 447 pages, \$8.95

Reviewed by Paul McGuire

THE AUTHOR -- Steven King. He has previously written *CARRIE* and *SALEM'S LOT*. Both were horror novels.

THE MAN -- Jack Torrance, recently reformed alcoholic. After he viciously attacked one of his students for reasons not completely explained Jack was fired. Now he is desperate. The job of caretaker at the Overlook Hotel seems to be his last chance. If he can just hold his temper in and stay off the bottle. It means that he and his family will be cut off, alone, snowbound for most of the winter, but what choice does he have?

There is something not quite right about Jack Torrance.

THE WOMAN -- Wendy Torrance, suspicious of her husband, protective of her son. Things are getting better. She desperately wants the Overlook job to pull them together and give them a second chance. It seems a wonderful opportunity, but she is fearful.

THE BOY -- Danny Torrance. Five years old, possessed of a gift or curse. He often reads minds. He has visions.

The Overlook appears to him as a terrifying place. He sees death, and

someone chasing him down the long halls, someone with a mallet, someone who wants to murder him.

That is not the worst of it.

THE SETTING -- The old Overlook Hotel with its mysterious past. A place where deaths have occurred; accidents, suicides, murders, and then the caretaker before Jack went mad and the bodies of him and his family are found in the spring. It is a haunted place, evil, as if with a malevolent will of its own. It wants the boy, and the man is the weak link.

A FEW OF THE ELEMENTS -- a lost scrapbook containing some long-hidden history. The "imaginary" friend, who knows things. The wasps that sting and do not die. A masked ball held several decades before, but has it finished? Hedges clipped to resemble animals like lions, that only move when you're not watching. A bloated woman long dead floating in an empty bathtub in room 217, waiting.

And worse, very much worse than these.

THE NOVEL -- Steven King has complex detailed characters, with pasts, but very uncertain futures. He begins his story with the horrors of reality and the powers of ESP. From this he slowly begins to enter the realm of supernatural terror.

Mr. King presents visions in the early sections of the novel which foreshadow the terror to come, but the atmosphere of growing unease and approaching fright is most effectively created by tricks of phrasing and discordant facts or bits of characterization.

With superb craftsmanship Steven King lures the reader in and lulls him into a suspension of disbelief before unleashing the real monstrosities of his hotel which is far more sinister than Hill House (*THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE* -- Shirley Jackson) or even *HELL HOUSE* (Peter Matheson).

And then the group is snowbound and the nightmare begins. Scenes of mystery and terror follow each other so well written that the dropping of a fire nozzle or the rattle of a bathroom curtain can fill one with dread, and when the true horror occurs the reader is in the grip of real fright, not wanting to go on (it's only a story and can't hurt you -- but what is about to happen will be terrible) yet unable to stop (it is just a novel, not real, and you must know what comes next at any cost). The thing is that at those times the reader is not relaxed and pleasurably scanning the page, but seeing and experiencing the story in a way more complete and believable,

more real, than any play or movie can hope to achieve since it is all happening not before your eyes but in your head.

And there is enough eeriness, supernatural occurrences, and terror here for three novels, yet each scene is carefully laid and lead into, growing out of what has come before and preparing for what will come next until the feeling of doom is overwhelming. This is one hell of a well-written novel and one of the most deliciously scary books ever published.

WEST OF HONOR

By Jerry Pournelle
Laser Books #50, \$1.25

Reviewed by Keith Soltys

WEST OF HONOR is set in Pournelle's future history of the Co-Dominium. Arrarat is a planet originally settled by the World Federation of Churches. Its original colonists, who had developed a peaceful agricultural society, are outnumbered by the CoDominium "convicts" or involuntary colonists. The government of Arrarat looses control of the conflict between the farmers and the convicts and calls for the marines. Instead of the regiment and the destroyer that he requested the governor gets a battalion of marines, mostly recruits, commanded by Captain John Christian Falkenberg who has appeared in other stories by Pournelle.

The story is told from the point of view of Hal Slater, one of Falkenberg's junior lieutenants. Slater is given the task of starting the campaign against the convicts by leading an expeditionary force to recapture a fort from the enemy. He succeeds and after that events get more complicated as politics begin to affect the military situation.

This isn't a "hard" science fiction novel, at least not in the strict sense. The technology is present and it's used but it fits seamlessly into the background where it belongs. Pournelle develops the society of Arrarat with the same care that some authors calculate planetary orbits and the care shows. The opening prologue could be used as a

blueprint for setting up a workable agrarian/high technology community.

The political statements are a little more obtrusive. In some ways this book resembles Heinlein's STARSHIP TROOPERS. Pournelle has created a highly disciplined interstellar marine corps with a strong sense of tradition. His soldiers fight because they are marines and they have honor even if the people they are fighting for don't.

However, WEST OF HONOR lacks the overall impact of STARSHIP TROOPERS. Part of the problem is that the book is just too short to allow Pournelle to put in the action sequences that Laser seems to require and develop the background at the same time. This is particularly noticeable in the last part of the book. The whole political background to the story is summed up by Falkenberg in one brief conversation. It would have been more effective if it had been revealed throughout the course of the story.

Using Hal Slater, an inexperienced junior lieutenant, as his viewpoint character gives Pournelle the opportunity to indulge in a lot of background development that might have been difficult otherwise. However, Hal doesn't have full responsibility for command decisions. Final responsibility lies with Falkenberg. I particularly didn't like the resolution of the battle of Beersheeba when Slater and his men are saved by a convenient artillery barrage. When Slater gets wounded there's a regeneration clinic that can put him back together again. All this reduces the tension to a rather low level.

Despite these reservations I enjoyed WEST OF HONOR. There's more depth to it than some of Pournelle's earlier books. It's certainly one of the best books that Laser has published.

SPACE VIKING

By H. Beam Piper
Ace Books 441-7780, \$1.50

Reviewed by Paul McGuire

The space war novel is to the space empire novel what the swash-buckler is to the historical. According to my arbitrary definition a space war novel is one which concerns an interstellar society, usually an empire (rising, stable or falling -- SPACE VIKING covers all three) and the main element is action. Like all labels this is a little vague and of limited use.

Pierre Barbet's unsatisfying juvenile THE NAPOLEONS OF ERIDANUS, and Gerard Klein's allegorical THE

MOTE IN TIMES EYE are both space war. Yet, filled with action, the DUNE trilogy would still clearly be of the space empire type. Ah, but where to put Gordy Dickson's DORSAL novels?

At any rate H. Beam Piper's SPACE VIKINGS is space war which also means that it's romantic escapism. That is the greatest strength of the book, that it reads as sheer rip-roaring adventure, neither pretending nor desiring to be more -- or less. If it makes you feel guilty to read a novel which does not loudly proclaim itself to be heavy-duty social conscious relevance about topical problems and filled with big thinks, well, don't buy this one. But it is your loss.

In the past it was said that iron men sailed wooden ships; from Piper it would seem that when the ships became metal the men became titanium. Piper's hero, Lucas Trask, is larger than life, yet believable. Since there were true heroes in the past why should there not be in the future? He is a man who loves with the whole of his being and seeks his vengeance with equal passion, dedicating his life, if necessary, gladly his death, to that grim aim. His motivation: the vicious murder of his wife by an insane villain almost within minutes of the ceremony. His method: a life of brutal violence for himself. Trask turns space viking.

Once stellar civilization meant the old Federation Planets, but colonists from there created the Sword Worlds. While they flourished the Federation collapsed into varying stages of barbarism. Now the parent worlds are being raided by stargazing Vikings.

Trask sets his base within the old Federation and, while waiting for his enemy's attack, begins to civilize that world. The building of his fleet draws him into intergalactic politics. Before long he is at the center of the cultural drift back to the Federation Planets as they rise from chaos and corruption to claim the Sword Worlds. Eventually Trask is hunting his nemesis more to protect what he has gained than to avenge what he had lost.

Intertwined with the story of Trask's reawakening is the birth of one civilization and decay of another, space battles, intrigue, political theorizing, ground battles, and a large and very fine supporting cast. All is well written and highly enjoyable.

DON'T ANYBODY MOVE! TWO LINES ARE MISSING!



ECOTOPIA

By Ernest Callenbach
Banyan Tree Books
Distributed by Book People
2940 Seventh St., Berkeley, CA 94710
1975, 167 pp, \$275 paper

Reviewed by Neal Wilgus

Portland, December 31, 1999
(LEAK) -- Now that I've been a full-fledged Ecotopian for almost six months I decided it was time at last to visit the grand old man of my new nation -- The REG. I found him working busily at the ecobode where he's lived most of his life, pasting up copy for the 105th issue of SF REVIEW and stopping occasionally to cast an admiring glance at the 25 Hugo awards which cover two walls of his workroom. He invited me to join him in a glass of home-made wine and I pulled out my notebook and prepared to ask my first question but he quickly beat me to the punch.

"So you're the William Weston who wrote the prophetic ECOTOPIA, are you?" he asked. "What made you guess in advance that Oregon, Washington and northern California would secede from the union in 1980, Will? Are you psychic or something?"

"Well, no, that was Callenbach," I said, somewhat surprised. "He's the one who sent me from New York out to the capitol in San Francisco to get the story and negotiate secretly with President Allwen last summer. I guess he could see it coming back in 1975 after he finished his first book LIVING POOR WITH STYLE."

"Whoever it was, the idea was a natural, wasn't it?"

"In a way yes, in a way no," I replied over a sip of the brew. "The Northwest does seem to be a rather organic unit and it's probably more ecologically intact and anxious to stay that way than other regions. But I must say I wondered about the plausibility of secession actually taking place, given the economic and political unity of the old U.S. of A."

"Ecotopia solved that," REG observed as he refilled our glasses, "by planting nuclear bombs in Washington D.C. and elsewhere as insurance against invasion. What I questioned was the likelihood of the new nation developing a workable economy based on ecological principles, but that's worked out rather nicely in actual practice over the past twenty years."

"It's kind of strange, isn't it," I said. "The whole country has switched over to the do-it-yourself lifestyle that you've been practicing all along -- you and a few others who were never suckered into the old

consumer exploitation system in the first place. Now everyone's living simply, raising their own food, riding a bike instead of driving and actually paying attention to the environmental impact of their lives. With the help of some breakthroughs in solar power, biodegradable plastic, mass transit systems and a generally decentralized approach to things."

"Yes, that's worked out rather well," REG said with a slight sigh. "The only trouble is that ECOTOPIA -- book and country -- isn't very exciting. Callenbach is about as imaginative as Gernsback was -- and your news dispatches and journal notes might show great foresight but your characters are about as convincing as 124C41. Even Ecotopian sex is pretty dull to an old pornologist like me. No contest. No conflict."

"Oh, the conflict's here in Ecotopia," I said, polishing off the wine. "It's just that now it's moved to a different arena -- socio-ecological conflict, if you will -- rather than the old individuals-butting-heads type. Though we still have plenty of that too, alas."

"Yeah, like my eternal conflict with the printers and the postals," REG said, suddenly putting glass and bottle aside and getting to his feet. "I hate to cut it short like this but I'm already a week behind schedule. Welcome to Ecotopia, Mr. Weston -- we're all glad you finally saw the light."

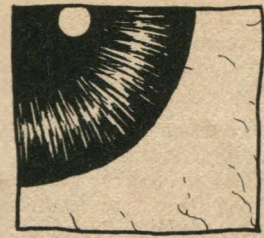
(Dec. 31) As I was leaving the REG ecobode I noticed a bizarre tentacled creature at work in a nearby field and paused to get a better look at it. As I moved closer it turned it's hate-distorted face toward me and screamed, "Some Utopia, Weston. Here it is twenty-three years later and I'm still digging rocks out of this goddamned garden!"

LONE STAR UNIVERSE

Edited by George W. Proctor and Steven Utley
Heidelberg Publishers, \$9.95

Reviewed by Michael Kalen Smith

Not only is this the first original sf anthology consisting entirely of the work of Texas authors, it's the first of its kind from any region of the country. Not all of these 17 pieces work for me, but there is an uncommonly high proportion of excellent stories--especially since most are by "new" writers. This is Heidelberg's first fiction release and its exposure is inevitably limited.



ed. But this is a book that ought to be read...and that ain't just Texas Chauvinism.

Howard Waldrop can write headlong action and creepy-crawly horror, but "Unsleeping Beauty and the Beast" is different--and quite good. Young and lovely Gini-in-the-machine meets young and ugly Bobby-from-the-freezer, and remembers the legends of her own time about the girl from the future and the boy from the past who led Earth to the stars--and brought back death.

Neal Barrett, Jr. is an introspective writer with a feeling for the human condition. "The Talking" is about the People--a small, balanced, self-sufficient society cut off from the outside. Anyone may claim a Talking with the chief, and young Darius, full of questions and mistrust of tradition, exercises his right. The result is a cameo of psychological adaptations to physical limitations, and the essential wisdom of both controlling and perpetuating curiosity. A neat, thoughtful piece of writing.

Tom Reamy is theoretically a new writer, but he's already picked up a couple of awards, and his two magazines (TRUMPET and NICKELODEON) are known far and wide. A Laffer-tyesque tale like "The Sweetwater Factor" is something of a departure from his usual petrifying style but he brings it off with wry humor ... and a rabbit punch at the end. I would have preferred something more substantial from one of the major Texas talents--but still a nice bit of fun.

Dr. Chad Oliver, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Texas is the "Dean" of Texas science fiction. "Community Study," written in 1953, is the original version of Shadows in the Sun. The premise is unsettling and very effective: What happens when an anthropologist discovers he's really just one of the aborigines? Solid, old-fashioned storytelling.

The most widely known Texas sf writer, Robert E. Howard, is represented by "The Coming of Bast," a florid and overwritten six-stanza poem. It's perfectly awful, but this obligatory bit of verse may be the only thing not tied up by other pub-

lishers.

"Every Day in Every Way," by the pseudonymous H.H. Hollis, presents the further experiences of Corky Craven, future Texas attorney (see *Again, Dangerous Visions*). Corky functions as an ethical/moral punji stick to booby-trap unthinking readers. In his Texas, capital punishment is neither cruel nor unusual; the worst offenders (rape/murder, etc.) are electrocuted before the TV cameras, one per month. Capital decisions are made by the Year Judge, who answers to no one. But there's a catch: The final execution of the year (to which every Texan must bear witness by television) is a double event--the worst felon and the Judge himself. He's the scapegoat modernized. The rationale behind the new Social Contract seems so balanced and reasonable, and doubts are so deftly sidetracked, that one is lulled into acceptance. Then comes the climactic execution itself

Joe Pumilia's "And Death Once Dead" is a tightly written, skin-crawling horror about cloning-as-resurrection. Does the clone of a dead wife have a soul? Or is it a zombie, to be killed without remorse? But when the "murderer" is executed and then resurrected This is the kind of story Rod Serling would have loved.

"Man-Made Self" represents Bruce Sterling's debut. He postulates a symbiotic fungus which extends the Self over a 20-foot sphere, like a thought-energy amoeba. But can a being of air molecules and pure thought have sensory awareness? Sterling undoubtedly has a heavy career ahead of him.

"The Migration" is not the story George Proctor wanted to have in this collection, but it's a nice little fantasy piece with a kicker. The Clan is gathering ... the Time has come for a new world. I can't say more without ruining the story, but the mood is eerie and the result is enjoyable if not notable.

Larry Holden's "Story of a Relative Theory" is a short-short packed with dozens of ideas. His picture of a world so over-populated that millions must be on a "floater duty" aloft is combined with tongue-in-cheek genealogy. A delightful sf distillate.

Reading James Sallis can be an intellectual exercise, but I was deeply disappointed with "The Invasion of Dallas." Instead of being intricate, it's merely obscure. The alien never becomes enlightened about anything, and neither does the reader. And the story just stops, abruptly and inconclusively. A defective effort from a usually fine writer.

"Fiddle Ess," by Glenn L. Gillette, is a technological problem story in the best ANALOG tradition. FTL Technician Cuppen, 58 days from discharge, is sent to help crew the Nereid Shuttle Station. Dealing with the Shuttle is like swapping mail bags with a speeding train. A short-timer often loses contact with reality and he makes mistakes ... Gillette believes in happy endings, however, and his competent, unembellished style is a pleasure to read.

Steven Utley's "Ghost Seas" is a beautiful evocation of the desert that is--and that which was. A weathered old man living alone, and his devoted nephew who doesn't understand the true nature of the desert --these are the ingredients of a quiet chiller that flows over you like a blend of Preston Jones and Ray Bradbury.

T.R. Fehrenbach is better known as an historian, but he's also one of us. "From the Towers of Eridu" is a thoughtful narrative of an incident 2000+ years from now. To repel an invasion, Texas must join with the other independent sovereignties under the nominal leadership of the Prince of Dnvr--who's not so nominal after all, for he envisions the re-unification of the continent under himself. A united culture is a decaying culture, and Fehrenbach builds a good case. Reflective readers will find much here to ponder.

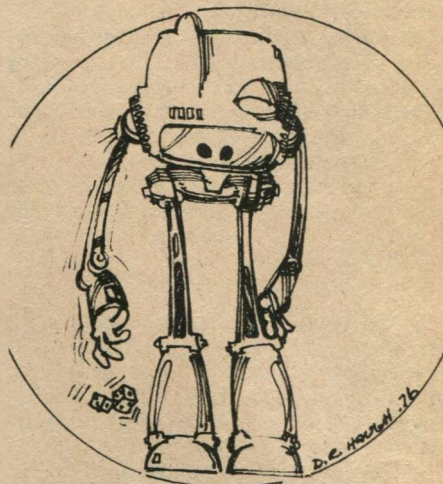
The Presidential sweepstakes and the Top 40--consider the similarities. Robert Lory attempts it, in "The Recent Semifinals," but fumbles. Naming a rock group "Ulrich Van Boots and his Fortified Oatmeal" might be funny--once. But 28 times in eleven pages is overkill.

One of the best natural talents to come out of the Clarion workshop is Lisa Tuttle. She has an astonishingly mature style and a flair for imagery. "Woman Waiting" tells of a young mother's mental deterioration as she searches for the child she aborted. Or else ... it's her gradual realization of what actually became of the foetus. A wonderfully harrowing story.

"Back to the Stone Age," by Jake Saunders, is a saddening and somewhat depressing story. It's also the best thing in the book. In the first-person/present tense, it relates the experiences of a B-29 over Japan on the last day of World War II--in 1954. No A-Bomb, no invasion, just nine years of conventional obliteration. Bolivia does its bit by chartering its one bomber to reporters and VFW posts who want to buy bombs and see them dropped personally. Saunders investigates the ef-

fects of General LeMay's "solution" in a more "justifiable" war. This quietly narrated picture of truly total war goes on my Hugo ballot.

A most remarkable book indeed. And a second volume is not an impossibility: There are a lot of good Texas writers, like Marion Bradley, Greg Benford, and Walter M. Miller, Jr. ... why, this may be the beginning of a Movement!



RUN TO STARLIGHT

Edited by Martin Henry Greenberg, Joseph D. Olander, and Patricia Warrick.
Delacourt, 1976, \$8.95

Reviewed by M. Ray Smith

RUN TO STARLIGHT is not a stunt or a gimmick, or a ploy to cash in on a fad. It is a marriage of sports and speculative fiction.

As this is written, RUN TO STARLIGHT is available in hardcover. A paperback edition is expected soon. The marketing approach has been toward the libraries rather than the SF community. A paperback edition will deservedly make the book available to the average SF reader. This is the first anthology of science fiction sports stories ever published.

Bearing in mind that RUN TO STARLIGHT is being marketed as a Juvenile, I still found some of the introductions gratingly banal and decidedly lightweight. One small example---here is how the editors conclude the intro to Zelazny's "The Doors of His Face, The Lamps of His Mouth":

"...Stories about the fish-fisherman relationship and the myths and symbols associated with it have tremendous appeal to a broad range of Americans. For example, Hemingway's THE OLD

MAN AND THE SEA finds its more contemporary counterpart in the best-selling novel by Peter Benchley, *JAWS*, a story about a huge shark and the implications of its presence for a small Long Island town."

There goes Hemingway, after the editors, with a fungo bat.

That much said, on to the stories. George Railroad was chosen to open the book with the title story "Run To Starlight" about football between humans and non-humans which fascinated me the first time I read it in *AMAZING* but paled somewhat when I re-read it here. His other contribution is a SF non-story, entertainingly (somewhat) and sadly drawn out, called "The Last Super Bowl Game" featuring guess which famous team from Wisconsin.

Norman Spinrad contributes his vision of "The National Passtime," not so much a story either, as a telling, of bare-ass combat football.

Baseball fares a little better as a source for stories. The editors found two classics: Will Stanton's "Dodger Fan" and Fred Pohl's "The Celebrated No-Hit Inning." In both stories the protagonist is taken either off-world or into another time by quasi-scientific means. Both are good, entertaining stories from the 50's.

The final baseball story is by George Alec Effinger, "Naked to the Invisible Eye," about a psychic rookie sensation. It is well-paced and well-plotted. The characterization is realistic. The ending, however, is dissatisfying because Effinger loses sight of his character, Rudy Ramirez, and fumbles around because his plot has come to an end.

E. Michael Blake's "Goal Tending" is an upbeat story that envisions a zero gravity version of basketball called Foci. The characters are more of the lucite rather than wooden variety.

Robert L. Fish's golf fantasy "To Hell With the Odds" is, if not earth shattering, a fine story, a good read. Lee Trevino's bout with lightning makes it seem all the more plausible.

Good boxing will hold me equally fascinated as good baseball. The zen-like qualities. *RUN TO STARLIGHT* has two boxing stories, "Title Fight" by William Campbell Gault and "Steel" by Richard Matheson. Both are interesting and well-plotted. "Steel" is the better of the two. Its characterization is more vivid and sympathetic and the resolution of the conflict is more plausible and satisfying. "Title Fight"

struck me as more concerned with making a point than telling a story.

I cannot believe that chess is a sport, so I will not comment on Poul Anderson's fine story "The Immortal Game." Unless we wish to insist that all sport is ritual conflict, or war. I hardly think so. Chess is a religion, or something. Any aficionados of Risk in the grandstand?

Hunting and Fishing are tough to write SF stories about because they were and are for most people economic, not sport activities, and aside from the invention of the gun and the recent development of the compound bow, the technology of hunting and fishing has remained basically unchanged for thousands of years. The SF writer is faced with a huge challenge. How does SF fare here?

Brian Aldiss used time travel and a double-talk gun. I thought his story "poor Little Warrior" silly and unbecoming.

The editors surprised me with the fishing story. When I first read Zelazny's "The Doors of His Face, The Lamps of His Mouth" I never thought of it as a sports story (making it, not "Run to Starlight" the first SF sports story I ever read).

The best stories in this anthology are the Zelazny and Richard Matheson's "Steel." These two do the best job of telling a perceptive sports story, and I emphasize those last two words. The others don't stand up because they project a futuristic idea more than telling a Real Sports Story.

Purist nit-picking aside, I think the editors of *RUN TO STARLIGHT* have done an excellent job of assembling stories representing a broad spectrum of sports. But this is hopefully only a beginning. There are a lot of great sports stories as yet unwritten. The editors are already planning a second anthology.

OFFICIAL GUIDE TO THE FANTASTICS

By Michael Resnick

House of Collectibles, 212 pages, \$5.95

Reviewed by Bruce Nyhoff

I suppose a lot of science fiction fans got involved in the collecting scene the same way I did-- because a lot of worthwhile SF is not available in print (except for the really big names.) Thus, much of the information in Resnick's book will not be new to those familiar

with dealers and catalogues. The only real basis for the claim "official" is that all of the book's prices were derived from a consensus of dealers and catalog prices. A wide range of areas are covered, but some are dealt with superficially. Also, some of the subjects are of only marginal interest to the SF/fantasy collector.

Most collectors are already acquainted with the information presented in the first section of the book: where to look for "collectibles," lists of established dealers, condition terms, why dealers pay less than market value, etc.

Only American publications are listed in the book, and every item has two prices assigned to it: "good-very good" and fine-mint." Each section or classification begins with a brief history of publishing in that area, and collecting trends.

In his sections devoted to the pulp magazines, Resnick has included hero pulps (the Shadow, Doc Savage, etc.) and the S-M mystery pulps, even though they are only marginally related to SF/fantasy. I suppose there was no place for them in any of the publisher's other collector's guides.

Resnick has compiled a comprehensive list of all professional SF and fantasy magazines beginning with *WEIRD TALES* (1st issue-\$600-fine). However all the magazines are listed by volume and issue number. Most collectors are used to referring to the magazines by year and month of issue.

Edgar Rice Burroughs is placed in a special section by himself (deservedly). All hardcover editions and paperback first editions for every Burroughs title are listed with the year of publication. Also listed are biographies, bibliographies, fanzines, sequels by other authors, and Big Little Books. Burroughs' appearances in the SF/fantasy magazines are specially noted in that section and his appearances in general fiction magazines are not listed except for the first appearance of Tarzan.

The Burroughs section and the following section on "small press" publishers are the two strongest features of *OFFICIAL GUIDE TO THE FANTASTICS*. Resnick covers not only Arkham, Gnome, Donald M. Grant, Advent and other prominent specialty publishers but also numerous minor publishers (many of whom only published one book). The only major omission is not including the year of publication of each title listed. Resnick cuts off his listings of active publishers at around 1970 because many such later books are

WOW! -18°F AND
20-30 MPH WINDS.
I'M GONNA ARREST
THE FIRST **Q**!!
THAT COMES BY
JUST SO I CAN GET
WARM!



still in print. Scanning the lists of titles in this section causes a certain mental salivation. I think one reason why certain specialty publishers print relatively few copies of their books---it's a way to "pre-sell" the market; their books become virtually "instant" collector's items.

The sections on general hardcover and paperback publishing are necessarily non-comprehensive; however it would have been an improvement to have included the publisher and year of each title. Individual titles for especially prominent authors are not listed in the hardcover section. Instead Resnick makes generalized statements such as "The works of Poul Anderson, in first edition hardcovers with dustjackets, will go from \$7.00 to \$15.00 apiece, depending on how old they are."

A few paperbacks are exceptionally valuable and are specially noted. The most valuable item in SF/fantasy collecting is the hardcover edition of *THE SHIP THAT SAILED TO MARS* by William Timlin ---\$850-fine.

Resnick has compiled a comprehensive list of noteworthy fanzines but gives the editors/writers of only a few. He notably omits Leland Sapiro's *RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY*. Surprisingly, the most valuable issues of *TAC/SFR* are the most recent ones.

The remaining sections are devoted to Star Trekiana, original artwork, radio premiums (Captain Midnight 3-way Mystic Dog Whistle ---\$32.50-fine) and miscellanea such as convention souvenir books.

The *GUIDE* features numerous b/w cover reproductions for most categories (generally 1-1/2 x 3") and eight pages of color reproductions, half of which are non-SF pulps.

In sum, the strong points of *OF-*

FICIAL GUIDE TO THE FANTASTICS are the illustrations and the sections on Edgar Rice Burroughs and small publishers. The rest of the material is rather distensible, and the book gives a general impression of being overpriced.

The address is:
HOUSE OF COLLECTIBLES
P.O. Box D,
Florence, AL 35630

MONOLOG CONTINUED FROM PAGE 64

BOOKS RECEIVED

Indeed, what I have feared has happened: the books have engaged in incestuous, obscene acts and reproduced shamelessly. I must act instantly to reduce their number!

ASTRA AND FLONDRIX

By Seamus Cullen
Pantheon, \$3.95, 1977, 285 pages.

'ASTRA AND FLONDRIX represents a departure in the field of fantasy fiction: an erotic Tolkien. Seamus Cullen, using a humor ranging from the gentle to the ribald, has joined past mythology to a post-atomic age. In doing so he has created a magical world for adults as unique as the one Richard Adams created for children in *WATERSHIP DOWN*.

'The book begins "many years from now," when, in a rude new world built on the atomized ashes of the old, a son is born to Barlocks, the Dark King---a son part mortal and part elf. This son, Flondrix, the product of Barlocks' unheard-of sexual transgression with an Elvan princess, sets out on a gargantuan quest for both a past and a future, wending his way through neo-medieval kingdoms of dwarves, people, and Elves. What the naive Flondrix never realizes is that he holds the future of the world between his thighs.

'The book's own special apocalypse is reached in the confrontation between the distorted skills of the scientist-sorcerer Kranz and the innocent sensuality of Flondrix and Astra, the daughter of the Elvan king. The result: a fourth world war---of magic.'

COMMENT: In the large pb size, on good white paper, with a provocative and lovely, symbolic (pink phalli) landscape cover by Peter Goodfellow.

It is not so much erotic as sexual, with much imagination shown in the structure and use of Elvan sex organs, techniques and customs. An interesting melding of honest sex and fairy tales...tails?

'SEX IS NOT AN EASY SUBJECT TO WRITE ABOUT, MAINLY BECAUSE IT IS WET. IN FACT IT IS MORE THAN WET, IT IS SLIPPERY.'

--SEX IN HUMAN LOVING by Eric Berne

NEW DIMENSIONS #7

Edited by Robert Silverberg
Harper & Row, \$8.95, 1977.

"The Retro Man" by Gordon Eklund.

"The State of the Art on Alyssum" by Marta Randall.

"Black as the Pit, from Pole to Pole" by Steven Utley and Howard Waldrop.

"You Are Here" by Phyllis and Alex Eisenstein.

"Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Bat" by J.A. Lawrence.

"The Almost Empty Rooms" by John Shirley.

"In the Stocks" by Barry Malzberg.

"Home Sweet Geriatric Dome" by Felix C. Gotschalk.

"Knowing Her" by Gregory Benford.

"The Blood's Horizon" by A.A. Attanasio.

"Several Ways, and the Sun" by Henry-Luc Planchat.

"The Princess in the Tower, 250,000 Miles High" by Fritz Leiber.

COMMENT: Darrell Schweitzer will review this next issue. I may, given time, have a few words about it or parts of it, myself.

MANY FUTURES, MANY WORLDS

Edited by Thomas Clareson
The Kent State University Press
\$12.50 cloth, \$5.50 paper. (1976)

Subtitled: Theme and Form in Science Fiction.

Introduction by Thomas D. Clareson.

"Perception and Value in Science Fiction" by Thomas L. Wymer.

"Many Futures, Many Worlds" by Thomas D. Clareson.

"The Science in Science Fiction" by Stanley Schmidt.

"Revivals of Ancient Mythologies in Current Science Fiction and Fantasy" by C. S. Fredericks.

"Tyranny by Computer: Automated Data Processing and Oppressive Government in Science Fiction" by Carolyn C. Rhodes.

"The Known and the Unknown: Structure and Image in Science Fiction" by Gary K. Wolfe.

"Lost Lands, Lost Races: A Pagan Princess of Their Very Own" by Thomas D. Clareson.

"Virgin Territory: The Bonds and Boundaries of Women in Science Fiction" by Beverly Friend.

"Science Fiction as Fictive History" by Robert H. Canary.

"Images of the Man-Machine Intelligence Relationship in Science Fiction" by Patricia Warrick.

"Science Fiction as Simulation Game"
by Steven Kagle.

"Theology, Science Fiction, and Man's
Future Orientation" by J. Norman
King.

"The Philosophical Limitations of
Science Fiction" by Patrick G.
Hogan, Jr.

"Critical Methods: Speculative Fic-
tion" Samuel R. Delany.

COMMENT: This cannot be any good
because there is no mention of either
me, Alter-Ego, of SFR in the index.
But seriously... I suppose this
carving-out-of-territory and
creation-of-expertise in the corpus
of sf is of some value. Academic
types do have to make a living. And
sf and fantasy, in academic publish-
ing circles, have become the new
growth industry. But who READS this
stuff after the author, the editor
and the proofreader? I know--stu-
dents.

THE KARMA MACHINE

By Michael Davidson

Popular Library 03202, \$1.50

'Do you want to be reborn?

Do you want your mind wiped clean?
Do you want to wake up with no name,
no past, no hang-ups, and with the
future lying empty and glorious be-
fore you? Do you want the chance to
discover your ultimate potential and
who you truly are?

'You are invited to journey into
the near-future to the island of Suk-
havati where the most ancient spirit-
ual wisdom of the East has been wed
to the most advanced Western comput-
er technology to produce a machine
that can either save humanity or de-
stroy it...a machine that can create
an eternal Nirvana or an unending
nightmare on Earth...'

COMMENT: a novel, and a good one, of
ideas, philosophy, of ends and means
writ large. This one will make you
think and will definitely make you
re-examine what you believe to be
Truth.

Read this lovely quote from page
112-113:

'KRAZATSKY: (throwing both arms
in the air for silence, and getting
it): So the only reason the world is
in trouble is that we, your leaders,
force wars and armaments upon you.
We force our will upon you, is that
right?

'I will now ask you one question.
I, Nicholai Krazatsky, Secretary of
the Party, Premier and Dictator of
all Russia---I, Krazatsky, am bald!
Now, as Secretary, Premier and Dic-
tator, I see no reason why, if I am
bald, other Russians should go
flaunting themselves about in the
bourgeois manner, with hair. There-
fore, I give the order that, within
twenty-four hours, every Russian,

regardless of age, sex or party stat-
us, be shaved clean as a whistle! I
want them all bald like myself!

'Here is my question: will this
order be obeyed? Will the tough fac-
tory workers, let alone the army and
air force veterans obey me? I ask
you, would even a woman obey me? I
tell you, all Russia would not stom-
ach it, and I, Krazatsky, would be
through! Finished!

'I could not even get you peas-
ants to cut off your hair, yet you
say I force war down your throats!
(Slowly and emphatically) You know
in your guts that we leaders cannot
do what you will not let us do. I
am neither your Christ nor your Jud-
as; neither your savior nor your be-
trayer. Morally, I am your image!
(Here there is silence for many mom-
ents, the crowd off-balance and
stunned.)'

So it goes.

STAR MOTHER

By Sydney J. Van Scyoc

Berkley 03345-7, \$1.50

'Centuries had passed since the
first Earth colonies were founded.
Evolution had played cruel tricks.
The backplanet of Nelding was an es-
pecially tragic case. There, an er-
uption of grotesque mutations had
divided the colony into two hostile
races.

'Peace Cadet Jahna came to Neld-
ing to care for mutant infants, and
soon found herself the center of a
strange sacred rite, the object of
both deep veneration and fearful,
murderous hatred. Hailed as the
bearer of new, healing life by some,
vilified as a force of devastation
by others---was she the long-awaited
deity from the skies, the awesome
and legendary StarMother?'

COMMENT: This has strong gothic ele-
ments, and an interesting variegated
mutant society and culture. Worth
reading.

SLAN

By A. E. van Vogt

Berkley 03352-X, \$1.25

'Years ago, Mankind fought a-
gainst the hated slans in the
fierce Slan Wars. The result was
the extermination of almost all slans,
and the establishment of a worldwide
police state.

'But slans Jommy Cross had escap-
ed extermination and was now living
in constant fear in the world of
cruel humans. Jommy was determined
to avoid detection, track down oth-
er surviving slans, and with them,
the mystery of the slans' strange
existence and superiority...'

COMMENT: As Darrell Schweitzer judg-
es in his column, this is one of the
classics of sf. Indeed, van Vogt,
with SLAN, THE WORLD OF A, and THE
WEAPON SHOPS OF ISHER, may have
written three of the most influen-
tial books of the genre.

RAUM

By Carl Sherrell

Avon 33043, \$1.50

'Brought to the world of mortal
man through the evil incantations of
the powerful Jord, the mighty warrior
Raum battled through the frigid waste-
lands of Everspring...defied the
bloodthirsty Viking hordes...felled
the finest knights of Camelot...and
matched his powers against the magic
of Morgan Le Fey in his quest for
the sorcerer Merlin, the one mortal
who could wrest the centuries-old
burden from Raum's great shoulders.

'But Raum paid a terrible price
for his visitation to the world of
man. No longer would he be invulner-
able on the field of battle. No
longer would demon-like powers of
sorcery be his to command. And as
Asteroth had warned, he was about to
face that which made mortal man most
vulnerable....'

COMMENT: Standard pb size, with a
very good wrap-around Fabian cover.
And with four full-page Fabian in-
terior illos. (One of which is
printed below.)



THE VIVISECTOR

BY DARRELL SCHWEITZER

BEST SF: 75

Edited by Harry Harrison & Brian Aldiss.
 Bobbs Merrill, 1976, 240 pp, \$10.00

There's one thing about the Harrison-Aldiss BEST series which makes it of more interest to the hardcore sf reader than the Carr, del Rey or Wollheim anthologies. Those books, as good as they may be, tend to draw their material almost exclusively from the regular science fiction magazines and original anthologies. So anyone who reads those magazines and anthologies regularly has little need for a BEST OF THE YEAR collection filled with familiar material.

But the Harrison-Aldiss BEST consistently draws from periodicals outside the field, and while it's sometimes debatable whether or not this really is the best sf published each year, it does provide the potential buyer with a better excuse for plunking his money down.

The present volume, for example, contains stories from CRAWDADDY, THE NEW YORKER, and FACTIONS, along with poems from THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT and CORUNDO, which I bet 90% of you haven't seen before. (Just as an aside, I wonder how many sf fans know that science fiction and fantasy appears regularly in THE NEW YORKER? The issue containing the Updike story reprinted here also contained a Sylvia Townsend Warner Elfland story---one of the series now collected as THE KINGDOMS OF ELFIN---thus placing more than half of the fictional contents that week into "our" field. I wonder how many sf writers have considered the implications of this?)

While the range of source material may be admirable, however, I can't say I'm happy with all the selections. I doubt it'll surprise any of you when I say I don't think Barry Malzberg's "A Galaxy Called Rome" belongs here. (Or deserved publication to begin with.) For one thing it's not a story but, repeating a gimmick Malzberg has used before, notes for a story. What we have here is synopsis with running commentary (which reveals a wildly pretentious and wholly superficial understanding of sf), spliced with sections of incredibly banal dialog. For example, when a starship's engineer is awakened from suspended animation to confront the black hole the ship has fallen into, all he can do is exclaim, "Why that's terri-

ble!" and similar phrases worthy of Franklin W. Dixon. The "notes" reveal all:

'Their resemblance to the three comforters of Job will not be ignored here, and there will be an opportunity to squeeze in some quick religious allegory, which is always useful to give an ambitious story yet another level of meaning.' (p.56)

'It can be seen that the satiric aspects of the scene above can be milked for great implication...' (p.58)

Also unsatisfactory is Stephen Robinett's "The Linguist," which I could not believe for an instant. Our hero is in the illegal "engram transplant" business, which means he learns a language the hard way, then has this memory transplanted into the thick skull of some lazy student. A complication arises because he is a fanatic about literature and must read DON QUIXOTE in the original before his knowledge of Spanish is taken away for the umpteenth time. The story opens with him holed up in a desert set right out of a TV western, alternately taking pot-shots at his enemies and turning the pages. I guess the moral is: kill for art. Nice but, quite frankly, ridiculous. Also the chief gangster is an incredible pat-sy, who promises the hero an expense-paid vacation and forgiveness if he'll surrender, even though a moderately important flunkey has just had his scalp creased. More likely a genuine Mafiosi would break both his arms and assign a thug to turn the pages of the next language manual.

I must confess additionally, perfectionist and sourpuss that I

am, that I wasn't completely satisfied with Algis Budrys' "A Scraping At the Bones" either. The writing is extremely muddy. Consider this:

'It was the woman who moved--- who sprang from her place and flew to the wall, and so it developed that it was for her---for the To Be Widow Fortnum---that Brosner had worn his suit. She gaped unbelievably as his servos operated the auxiliary mesh skin over his body and gave him the speed and strength of ten, so that though she flew as the gannet, he struck as the hawk.'

(p.18)

What exactly is going on in this paragraph? Brosner is a policeman (aside from this, no personality) who has just cornered two murderers. Of course---they always do in scenes like this---the woman seems to be reaching for a weapon, but contrary to the old Chekov principle, there is no loaded pistol on that wall that the author bothered to mention. We fill in the gap, doing Budrys' job for him. Also I might suggest that since the characters don't have wings, the "flying" metaphor is over-extended and strictly for the birds.

On the positive side, the story contains a few interesting ideas about life in a heavily populated future, and about the mass-produced arts such a future would consume wholesale. (As the present already does.)

Lisa Tuttle's "Changeling" is a good story, but not nearly up to the level of her Nebula-nominated "Stone Circle." It's an effective but routine story about totalitarianism in the United States, and parents fearing (with reason) their already indoctrinated small children. The problem is that sometimes the writing lapses near to cuteness, although towards the end it does tighten up considerably.

Really good is Richard Cowper's "The Custodiana," which again takes familiar material (familiar mostly through A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ) but it is not routine. Past, pres-



ent and a future which includes the extinction of the human race blend together in an account of a quasi-occult device for seeing the future which has existed in a French monastery since ancient times. Cowper writes well. His style isn't blatantly noticeable, as the case should be with good writing, but when an impatient, superficial 22-year-old woman comes to the monastery, the tone and texture of the prose shifts from slow and serene to hurried and goshwowish. This is exactly what is required for this section, and it works.

"The Santa Claus Compromise" by Thomas Disch is a very witty--- well, essay. It occurs to me that critical vocabulary lacks a term for the history of imaginary events which, as opposed to a story, lacks characters or specific viewpoint. GALAXY used to call them "non-fact" articles, and Borges calls them "fictions." The form is common in science fiction because it's a good way to bring across an idea succinctly. (In fact it seems to be what Our Father Gernsback was aiming for in the first place. He showed little interest in fictional values.) Disch's particular specimen begins with the granting of full civil liberties to five-year-olds (again--- need I say it?---the familiar idea) then goes on to the resultant political scandal when it is alleged there is no Santa Claus. Any similarity to contemporary events, I'm sure, is strictly coincidental.

"Settling the World" by M. John Harrison is probably the strangest and most original item in the book. God, who turns out to be a giant beetle, is discovered on the far side of the moon by a renewed Apollo program, towed to Earth, and set down to England, where life becomes just peachy save that an inaccessible highway leading from the sea to Him appears, along which huge vehicles crawl slowly, bearing parts of a gigantic human figure. The story concerns an attempt to slip an A-bomb on one of those trucks and let Him have it. The situations are absurd and underplayed, and the characters are puppet-like spies reminiscent of those in Pynchon's "Under the Rose" (in all honesty and heresy, I prefer Harrison). I suspect there's a bit of Ballard's "The Drowned Giant" in all this too. In any case it holds interest through dull stretches (it is the nature of puppet-like characters that no emotions or other human characteristics are attached to them) by sheer oddity and imagery.

"The Chaste Planet" by John Updike is another essay about imaginary events, this time the discovery of a tiny planet floating inside Jupiter's atmosphere which is inhabited

by 18-inch tall, multi-legged silver pickle-creatures who get off on music the way humans do on sex. Much change, not to mention corruption, occurs when the human colonists introduce advanced musical technology. Innocence is lost for a few 78 rpm records. The strength of this is the invention, although the situation is not as well developed as it could be. The pickle-creatures have no personality. Since this is not a story, there are no characters. I can't help but wish it were one. As is, it is amusing and competently written, but nothing outstanding.

"End Game" by Joe Haldeman is the final part of THE FOREVER WAR and probably already familiar to you as such.

"A Dead Singer" by Michael Moorcock is a splendid story which brings Jimi Hendricks back to life as a kind of mythological creature of the fading 1960's counter-culture. The story succeeds in technique where many Moorcock shorts, notably some of those in THE LIFE & TIMES OF JERRY CORNELIUS (Allison & Busby, 1976, £3.50), fall flat. When writing this sort of material Moorcock is a very quiet, toned-down writer, and his stories consist mostly of descriptions of landscapes and various objects, with considerable space devoted to what music is being played, and little development of any sort. Sometimes the essentials get cut away along with the non-essentials, and while not as rigidly lifeless as a Ballard "condensed novel," the results are less than good reading. But here everything comes together. The characters live, and the events form a meaningful continuity, and Moorcock has succeeded in writing the story he often says he's trying for: one which is clearly of its time, which captures and incorporates the "myth landscape" of the 20th century. Harrison and Aldiss have done us a great service by bringing this piece to our attention.

THE CLEWISTON TEST

By Kate Wilhelm
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976,
244 pp., \$8.95

It's been a while since I read a Kate Wilhelm novel---the last one was LET THE FIRE FALL, when it came out---and I'm pleased to note that since then she has gained a considerable amount of technical mastery, even if there are one or two things in this new book I'm not entirely happy about.

Simply, the novel is perhaps 25% too long, and would have benefited from some tightening. There are whole sections which add nothing to

the whole. This is probably the result of an unusual technique not entirely under control---THE CLEWISTON TEST, you see, is "experimental" in a way the "New Wave" dribblings of a decade ago could never be. Its prose is very sedate, maybe a bit wordy, and it's only after fifty pages or so that you realize that a tour de force is going on under your very nose.

The point of view shifts a surprising number of times (sixty-four, according to Joanna Russ, who was counting), so that the entire novel is made up of short segments (no doubt dear to the heart of A. E. van Vogt who used to say there should be a new idea or a change of scene every 800 words) and multiple viewpoints, between which the author glides with unjarring ease, and miraculously without dear-reading or passages prefaced by 'he thought.' (Actually they usually have two or three words before the 'he thought,' and lots of italics like this: Roses are red, he thought, or they were at least before the Formalhautian fungus changed the genetic structure of everything -- and on for two pages. One of those things which is tiring when overworked to the point of cliché.)

What's wrong is there are too many viewpoint changes. At the drop of a synapse Wilhelm is delving into the feelings, perceptions, family history, etc. of minor characters and spear-carriers, and the reader wishes she would get on with the story(ies).

There are two storylines here, and they don't come together until 2/3rds of the way through. Story #1 is about Anne Clewiston-Symons, a scientist who is in danger of playing second fiddle to her husband even though she is the genius and he just the plodding mason who fills in the gaps between her leaps of brilliance. Because she is a woman, people assume as soon as she's out of the way (at home, recovering from an automobile accident) that it must have been the husband who did everything and who deserves the credit. (And who, she fears, will be allowed to muck up her project.) This is a very real problem about which Kate Wilhelm can write about more authoritatively than most other women because, as she revealed in an interview (conducted by Scott Edelstein and published in ETERNITY) she encountered it herself. She did very well in the sciences in school and wanted to go on to a scientific career, but then somebody took her aside and explained that there is no future for women in science because they don't get promoted beyond lab assistant. Even if the guy they're assisting is half as smart, the wom-

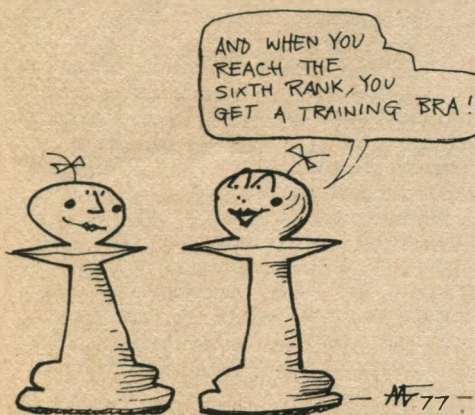
an stays put and the man moves on. If you don't believe this is true, check out Isaac Asimov's exhaustive BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (Equinox, 1976, \$5.95 -- recommended, by the way) and see how many women you can find.

Sure enough, Anne's mother can't understand that she's anything more than an assistant, and looks down on her for not having done as well as her sister (who seems to have married for money & comfort), but the -huth o- the matter is she's made a major breakthrough in medicine by discovering a super-duper pain killer.

Storyline #2 develops when the chimpanzees on which this is being tested start going psychotic, and the company officials, motivated by money, commercial advantage, desire for advancement, etc., want to cover up and market the stuff anyway. In the hands of a less ambitious writer this would have been the story, and a typical scientific problem tale would have resulted.

But Kate Wilhelm is interested in more than that. As Anne sits at home and her husband continues the experiment, she comes to new insights concerning the role of women in society and in scientific research. (Yep, this is -- dare I say it? -- a feminist novel, but not, I hasten to add shrill propaganda like THE FEMALE MAN. It's very good drama which makes its case without hatred, and in believable human terms.) Her seemingly ideal relationship with her husband begins to come slowly apart, and this is handled with a candor and intensity of focus reminiscent of Bergman's SCENES FROM A MARRIAGE.

(The critical cliché usually applied here would be that science fiction has rarely seen such realistic and living characterization and such honesty in dealing with subject matter, but to tell the truth I'm not sure the mainstream sees it much more often.)



Interspersed with this are happening at the lab, (which again is so vivid you remember it as if you've worked there), where it is increasingly obvious that the drug is going to do untold harm to the hundreds of women who will be the first human subjects. Both of these plots (yes, plots -- a word which I define as "a meaningful progression of events") are interesting, which is perhaps why I was impatient when the book didn't seem to be getting anywhere. Once the illusion of reality is established, an author should do something with it. There's a scene in which Anne tries to get out of her wheelchair before it's time, and her legs crumble under her, and she falls, risking serious further injuries. I felt unease and concern, far more than I ever would have if Kimball Kinneson had been buried under a ton of Kentucky Fried Asteroids. Okay, reality is established. Now onward.

Eventually everything comes to a head when it transpires that Anne may have used the drug on herself to help in her remarkable recovery. (She has a low pain threshold, but didn't seem to suffer much after a couple weeks out of the hospital.) Will she go mad? Did she take it? If she did, good drama could be built -- a woman desperately clinging to sanity and identity as one by one the chimps go berserk, as inevitably she must -- but it doesn't belong here. It's the old TURN OF THE SCREW problem, you see. If the ghosts are real the psychology doesn't hold water and the govenness is perfectly sane. Here, if Anne is mad, then all her perceptions about her relationship with her husband and the world are invalidated, and most of the important thematic material of the book is junked. But the husband wants to believe she is mad, because that absolves him of guilt. Anne is increasingly trapped by her marriage and pressures from the pharmaceuticals company, and when at last a solution of sorts is reached, it is through grave personal sacrifice and loss. There is no easy way out, but it is a dramatically satisfying conclusion, which is something welcome from an otherwise good writer with the bad habit of letting her stories trail off rather than end. ("The Plastic Abyss" and "On the Road To Honeyville" being notorious offenders.)

THE CLEWISTON TEST is a very fine novel, and yet another proof that science fiction has no cause for an inferiority complex. This one will hold up by any standards. Recommended highly, but not for the casual reader who just wants to kill a couple hours. It won't let you go that easily.

Two afterthoughts: First, I spotted an inconsistency. Of course with all that pain and worry, and the possibility that she used the drug, Anne's memory isn't what it should be, but on page 203 she distinctly recalls having tossed her sample of the stuff into the wastebasket in the presence of her mother and a nurse. Her mother scolded her for wasting something potentially useful. Yet this is never brought up when Anne is all but on trial for her sanity. Admittedly it's a slender bit of evidence, because nobody checked to see what was in the bottles, but I'd think once the crunch was on she'd fall back on this.

My other thought is a suggestion: This would make a very fine movie if intelligently acted and directed. And it would sell, because it is good drama and about something at the same time. It could be done with a small cast and relatively low budget. Of course it would have to be marketed as something other than sf, since there is still very little precedent for quality in science fiction films, and the best ones (like CHARLY) still have to rely on the producer not realising he's got one of those "sci-fi" things on his hands.

THE FINAL CIRCLE OF PARADISE

By Boris & Arkadi Strugatski,
translated by Leonid Ranen.
DAW Books, 1976, 172pp., \$1.25.

I gave up on this one after two chapters. I'd label it with a term Gardner Dozois coined: murk. In other words, after you read it you shake your head and wonder what you missed. In THE FINAL CIRCLE OF PARADISE I missed someone with a competent command of the English language. There is in each reader what I'd call a subliterate toleration threshold, a point of verbal ineptitude below which we just shut off. For me it's not very high. I've read lots of pulp fiction. Doc Smith is below the line, but David H. Keller, Clark Ashton Smith, and many other clumsy oldies are above it. (I've even been known to read a few pages of M. P. Shiel, although Hodgson's THE NIGHT LAND stops me cold.) I'm sorry to report, dear reader, that THE FINAL CIRCLE OF PARADISE is as far down in the depths as anything can be. The prose is incredibly stilted, the dialogue unnatural, and the narrative seems to jump forward and backward in time without warning, sometimes in the space of a paragraph. (Yes, THE CLEWISTON TEST also is fragmentary, but the difference is between a mosaic and a batch of scattered tiles.) Whenever someone in this novel is reminded of something there seems to be a scene

played back, or part of one, and it's hard to tell where present narration picks up again. The result is confusion. Also it should be noted that after two chapters (29 pp.) nothing has been initiated or established beyond the fact that the protagonist, a space traveller, has come to a resort somewhere in Europe, to do some sort of work. Most of the text consists of small talk, irrelevances, and fog.

The only question is who is to blame? I read a solo effort by Arkadi Strugatski in *INTERNATIONAL SF* some years back, translated by Mirra Ginsburg. It wasn't particularly distinguished, but still above average for (otherwise primitive) Russian sf. I can't believe that in collaboration with Boris he suddenly loses all literary gifts. No, Renen just isn't up to the job of translating into readable English. The book is a total loss. (But it does have a nice cover, by Lawrence Kresek, from whom I'd like to see more.)

THE DEVIL IN A FOREST

By Gene Wolfe

Follet Publishing Co., 1976, 224 pp \$5.95

"What's that?" said I.

"Gene Wolfe's new book," said Gardner Dozois. "It's a medieval fantasy."

Interested, I took down the title and publisher and wrote for a review copy, and when it showed up I discovered it was not what I had been led to expect. I think I know why, too. There's a definite pigeon-hole in American hardcover publishing for adult fantasy novels passed off as juveniles. Often they come out as adult books in paperback, but hardcover publishers don't yet understand fantasy, and think it's for kiddies. (Examples of what I have in mind are *THE FORGOTTEN BEASTS OF ELD* by Patricia McKillip, *LeGuin's Earthsea* trilogy, Cooper's *THE DARK IS RISING*, and so on.) Much of the best adult fantasy appears this way, free as it is from the lower literary standards and enforced stereotypes of "sword & sorcery," the other major category through which fantasy reaches the public.

Apparently such books make money, because Follet has seen fit to market *THE DEVIL IN A FOREST* as one of them, complete with a dustjacket flap mentioning St. Agnes' fountain, the site of many miracles, "the malevolent Mother Cloot with her mysterious powers," and "The ancient, awesome Barrow Man, whose soul-shattering spirit could not be bound by the grave."

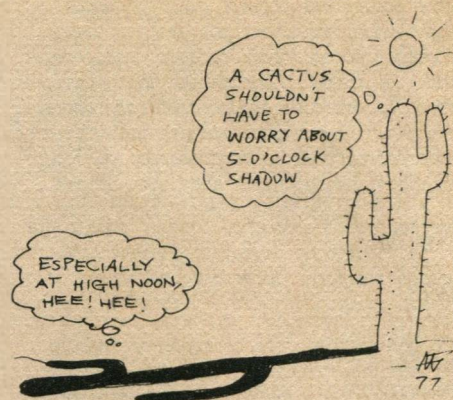
But once we get into the book

we see no miracles, learn that Mother Cloot is a fake (malevolent yes; supernatural, no) and encounter the Barrow Man only as a local superstition and an image in a nightmare.

The book is 1) a historical novel, 2) a real live juvenile of the sort I used to gobble up by the carload when I was about 11. The vocabulary is completely adult, but then the same is true of *TREASURE ISLAND* and *THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER* and quite a few other boys' books. There is a definite difference between this and the various adult works disguised as juveniles I've already mentioned. The protagonist is a 14-year-old boy, and that is not the difference. (I for one don't consider *HUCKLEBERRY FINN* a boys' book -- but *TOM SAWYER* certainly is.) The difference is that the adult world is seen only from the outside. The book isn't just about an adolescent; it is subtly adolescent in tone. Wolfe doesn't visibly write down to his readers, but his tale lacks emotional complexity. *THE FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS* this isn't.

If all the author set out to do was tell an exciting story, he's succeeded rather well. *THE DEVIL IN A FOREST* moves along nicely and is never dull. Some of the descriptions in it are very good, and the clarity of the prose is admirable. But there is a lack of substance which is not. At the outset Wolfe is thick on atmosphere; his setting is a remote woodland village, and the sense of isolation, the ignorance of the inhabitants, the limits of the boy protagonist's experience, and the superstitious dread with which anything beyond the everyday is regarded come off as very real. Wolfe brings the period alive without romanticising it, and you are there. He has all the details of life down, so even if there are historical errors which I've failed to detect, the picture is complete.

But unfortunately all this drops into the background when the plot takes over and runs away with the rest of the book. It's a rather commonplace affair of a notorious highwayman, several murders, and a band of soldiers who seem worse than the criminals. (Example of peasant rights: when a man is arrested he and anyone else the soldiers can lay their hands on is beaten senseless and questioned by torture, and finally as the bound prisoner is dragged away his house is set on fire -- all this before trial or conviction.) The characters don't develop much. I wanted to know more about the robber Wat, who sometimes seems a bold adventurer and not a bad sort, and at others a psychotic killer,



but he'll never stand still long enough through all the captures and escapes. All I can tell you about our hero, Mark, is that he's rather a bright but otherwise ordinary peasant boy. He finds the evil of Wat and his crew at times exciting and attractive before he recognizes the menace therein and turns the whole lot of them over to the authorities. The climax comes like that of a whodunit, as everybody explains all the loose ends away and a few surprises crop up also. Since this conclusion is brought about by Mark's change of heart, we should get more of his motivations and feelings than we do. He doesn't mature much, as boy heroes usually do. All he does is learn to compromise. Maybe this is why I think it's definitely a juvenile. There are no psychological closeups. I don't remember any in the books I used to read as a kid, but as I got older and sought out more sophisticated stuff, I began to expect them.

Basically *THE DEVIL IN A FOREST* lacks depth, which is why it's merely a reasonably good boys' book and not a great one. Once you've read it through the first time you've sounded the bottom, and that's all it has to offer.

Of interest to younger readers certainly, and to Wolfe completists, but otherwise of only limited appeal to adults.

REPRINT DEPARTMENT

Arno Press sent me a batch of their Occult and Supernatural reprint series, to wit: *THE CENTENARIAN* by Honore de Balzac (\$23.00), *FANTASTICS & OTHER FANCIES* by Lafcadio Hearn (\$14.00), *THE STRANGE PAPERS OF DR. BLAYRE* by Edward Heron-Allen (\$15.00), *THE DEVIL & THE DOCTOR* by David H. Keller, M.D. (\$17.00), *THE CHILDREN OF THE POOL* by Arthur Machen (\$14.00) and *THE FOX WOMAN & THE BLUE PAGODA* by A. Merritt and Hannes Bok (\$15.00).

This is only the tip of the ice-

berg in an excellent series (you might want their catalogue -- write to Arno Press, 330 Madison Av., New York, NY 10017) intended for libraries. Like most books for libraries, they're printed on nearly indestructible paper and in a uniform binding designed to survive anything short of a direct hit by nuclear weapons. They're also expensive, as the above prices indicate, and thus are not casual reading, but to be bought selectively.

The \$14 and \$15 items approach specialty-press prices, and if you are an Arthur Machen enthusiast you might want *THE CHILDREN OF THE POOL*, which was the Master's last collection of mythical and eldritch stories, published in 1936 and never seen at all in the U.S. prior to this edition. Machen was one of the all-time greats of supernatural fiction, and if you want all his fiction in your collection the Arno edition is probably the best way to fill this particular gap.

The Hearn volume is also of interest as a hard-to-get collection-completer. It's early work by the author of *KWAIDAN* and *SOME CHINESE GHOSTS*, collected from newspapers after his death. Need I say more? Well, yes, because Hearn is often overlooked within the confines of fandom (much to the loss of the fand). He wrote brilliant prose and could conjure bizarre images with hallucinatory vividness. His work was based on the folklore of the West Indies and later the Orient, and he brought other cultures and places alive for English readers better than anyone else, because he was both of the English-speaking world and whatever exotic place he happened to be in at the moment. (Eventually he settled in Japan, took a Japanese name, and became a citizen. Most of his books are about Japan.) His major fantasy works are the two listed above, and *FANTASTICS*, which H. P. Lovecraft said in "The Supernatural Horror in Literature" contains "some of the most impressive ghoulishness in literature."

THE DEVIL & THE DOCTOR was the only trade book of fiction by David H. Keller, MD, a notable of the early science fiction magazines. And, correct me if I'm wrong, but I think it's the first novel by a genre sf/fantasy writer to be published as a book, predating Sprague de Camp's landmark book sales by a year. Unfortunately this Cabellesque fantasy which shows more than proper sympathy for the Adversary dropped right out of sight, either because it didn't sell or (so the story goes) because it was considered too shocking at the time. (In the aftermath of *JURGEN*, I doubt it. By 1940, when Keller's book was published, such stuff

was very passe'. Admittedly seventeen bucks is a bit steep, but the extremely scarce original edition would probably cost you more.

The Merritt-Bok book was originally published by a fan specialty press after World War II, and in this edition it's a genuine bargain for Merrittophiles. The Arno edition is probably better than the original -- I saw the original once, and it looked like very cheap paper, perhaps even newsprint. The full-page Bok illustrations are reproduced beautifully and, as I said, these things are built to last. The two short novels were left unfinished after Merritt's death and completed by his number one admirer, Bok, who had also written some Merrittesque fantasies, notably *THE SORCERER'S SHIP*. Again, the original edition will probably cost you more than the Arno edition, and the stories are available nowhere else.

The Heron-Allen is a curiosity, a book of supernatural stories allegedly by a professor at a non-existent college, and published originally as just that, without the author's real name on it. It's like *THE TRAIL OF CTHULHU* being published as "by" Dr. Shrewbury, with no mention of Derleth.

THE CENTENARIAN is another curiosity, and a more important one; a lost early work by the author of *THE HUMAN COMEDY* published in English for the first time. As a book it's also an oddity, since the Arno series is made up of facsimile photo-reproductions (the best I've seen, too -- immaculately legible, quite unlike some of the books of a certain British publisher who shall remain nameless), so how do they handle an original manuscript? Simple: they reproduce the typescript. With this in mind, I'd think a lot of paper and expense could have been saved if the thing had been single-spaced.

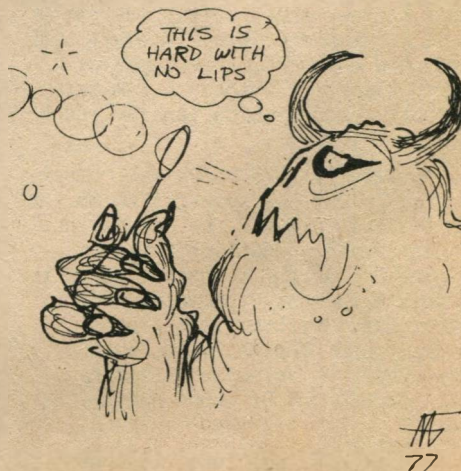
This series is a must for libraries. For collectors and readers, pick and choose.

Owlswick Press (P.O. Box 8243, Philadelphia, PA 19101) has just published a deluxe hardcover edition of L. Sprague de Camp's *THE TRITONIAN RING* at \$12.50. The novel should be familiar to most. It's one of the best sword & sorcery adventures ever written -- literate, intelligent, and not slavishly imitative of Howard. It is not entirely without serious content either -- there is some satire, notably the sequence concerning a pacifist society which refuses to resist an oncoming horde of barbarians, bringing about inevitable results -- and it hasn't dated a bit

since it first appeared in 1951.

This edition is for art fans (it has a color jacket and endpaper painting by George Barr and Jim Cawthorn, and in teriors by Cawthorn), for libraries, and simply for people who want to have the tale in a permanently bound edition, rather than just one of the innumerable paperbacks (currently Ballantine). My only regret is that it doesn't contain the three related short stories which were shorn from it after the first (Twayne, 1953) edition. If you fall into any of the above three categories, this is recommended.

Last but not least, I'd like to mention the new paperback printing of *SLAN* the Berkley people sent along (425-03352-X, \$1.25). For the benefit of newcomers, this is the first and best van Vogt novel. It's the only one that ever completely worked for me, and also the only one which had only one lapse of logic big enough to drive a planet through. This occurs at the end, when the bad guys have machine-gunned the heroine, and the hero flees, leaving them in possession of the body, which they will presumably examine, then dispose of. Yet at the finale she turns up inexplicably alive, just so they can live happily ever after. Aside from that it's a powerful, memorable (also somewhat paranoid) story of persecuted supermen which deserves its classic status. After this the author began to go downhill. His plots became less and less consistent, then less and less coherent. As Damon Knight has conclusively shown, for all his reputation for convoluted, wheels-within-wheels stories, van Vogt was a slapdash artist who seldom thought things through. A mere eight years after *SLAN* he published *THE PLAYERS OF NULL-A*. Good God.



COMMENTARY ON RAUN CONTINUED

This is a good read. Sherrell gives cleanly-written action, gore, dreaded sorcery, and succinct characterization. The story never drags and I was swept along willingly.

This is Sherrell's first novel; he'll be back.

THE TRITONIAN RING

By L. Sprague de Camp
Owlswick Press, \$12.50

See Darrell Schweitzer's review of this book on page 76.

THE EMPEROR OF THE LAST DAYS

By Ron Goulart
Popular Library 03201, \$1.50

'In the desert of Nevada, a bearded prophet was using TV to preach the end of everything to everybody.

'On a California estate, an ex-President was making a mint from his misdeeds by selling the public copies of his book, MY SEVEN FIASCOS.

'In Washington, D.C., his successor in the White House had decided to save the population from the perils of freedom by instituting a new order of enslavement that would last a thousand years.

'In a nefarious network that spread around the world, the richest and most powerful figures on earth were efficiently eliminating all opposition to the scheme.

'What could a lone computer do against all this?'

COMMENT: The Lone Computer could assemble a ragtag, odd combination of humans as its agents, and...

Ron Goulart's usual stew, tasty with satire and mocking insights into the human condition. I can't help it, I think he does a marvelous job of entertaining and acidly commenting, all with an astonishing grace and economy of words.

EATERS OF THE DEAD

By Michael Crichton
Bantam Books 10237-0, \$1.95

COMMENT: Too much hype in the blurb to quote as an accurate resume of the story. Crichton has created a fictional recounting of a Ninth Century adventure of a moslem ambassador among the Norsemen and Vikings of the upper Volga and scandinavia. The illusion of authenticity is created by bibliographic references (in

cluding one of the NECRONOMICON which is credited to H. P. Lovecraft, as editor!) and a discussion of the fragments of the original ms. which were translated and pieced together.

It is the story of encounters with the 'Mist Monsters' who inspire such superstitious dread in the Northmen. It is also a description of the lifestyles and cultures of the peoples Ibn Fadlan encounters during his journey and adventures. It is all realistic and graphic, sexual, dirty, brutal, gory, and inspiring. Well done.

At the end of the book there is a discussion concerning the possibility that the Mist Monsters were actually a remnant tribe of surviving Neanderthalers.

The Ian Miller full-page etchings are incredibly eye-catching and strange; you may buy the book for the illustrations alone.

STARHIKER

By Jack Dann
Harper & Row, 1977, \$7.95

'STARHIKER is ostensibly a straightforward adventure story, but what begins as external action from the floating city of The Fragrant Cloud to the land of the Tfeligen becomes an inerenal landscape in which Bo, a wandering minstrel from Earth, must travel. The time is thousands of years in the future when the Earth is a backwater planet ruled by a race of benevolent despots called the Hrau. Our solar system is only a minor interstellar relay stop controlled by the Hrau. However, Bo's vivid imagination is a powerful weapon against the Hrau's restrictions as he secretly roams from colony to colony seeking truth and the company of kindred spirits. The blind pursuit of an impossible destiny leads him just to the other side of his dreams.'

COMMENT: I liked the first half of this when it was serialized in AMAZING, but when the story lost tension and became more instrospective and self-indulgent, I stopped reading.

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---Harry Browne, HOW I FOUND FREEDOM IN AN UNFREE WORLD.

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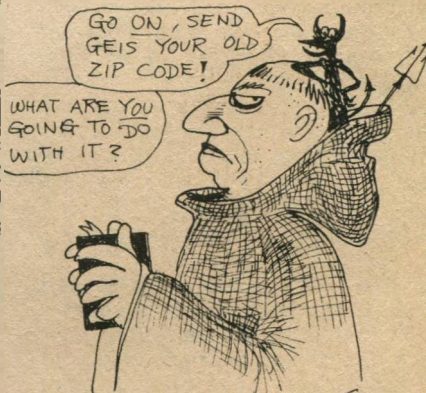
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HW
77

4-4-77 I have run out of pages already, which is both depressing and amazing. I could have written much more about current cultural, social and economic affairs, given the space, and I find I need even more room to list and comment upon the smallish pile of books-received to my left, as well as two small press items, a GALAXY and a VORTEX.

But first these stories in the SCIENCE NEWS of March 26 drew my bemused attention:

There is a newly becoming-respectable method of dating human remains, called amino acid racemization, which can "reach" further into the past than carbon-14 dating. It confirms the carbon-14 dating of ancient human bones.

This tends to sink certain fundamentalist religionists who go by the 'word of God' in the Bible as to how old mankind is.

With this amino acid technique early man has been confirmed in America to 40,000 years ago.

Another body blow to the fundamentalists in Christianity is the confirmation that those wooden beams and timbers found on Mt. Ararat in the 1960s are too young to be part of Noah's Ark. They date to only around A.D. 700. England's National Laboratory in the 1960s, UCLA in 1970, and now UC (all using carbon-14 dating) agree. The fundamentalists poo-poo carbon-14 dating, but find it impossible to demolish scientifically.

Gonorrhea has mutated again. It is now capable of producing an enzyme capable of destroying penicillin! And scientists are afraid this new gonorrhea gene may be transferable to other types of disease.

So it would appear that germs gotta live, too! And they are fighting back. It's war, folk!

It should be noted, though, that this is a further adaptation by the bacteria, not an instance of evolution. The fundamentalist's contention that only adaptation has been proved, and not evolution from one species or sub-species to another, is still persuasive to me. From what I read, scientists accept evolution on faith, as a logical and rational explanation for discovered facts, but they have not come up with living or fossil proof of "in-between" animals or fish or insects.

The stock market dropped another 12 points today after a short rally failed last week. The Dow-Jones Industrial average is now at 915 and appears sure to sink lower. Investors are afraid that Carter's energy saving plans will severely hurt the auto industry and the tour-

ist industry, the restaurant industry, the auto repair industry.... They also think higher interest rates are in the near future, and a shocking inflation of prices which will "force" the administration to turn to controls. Also, the "recovery" from the short, sharp 1974-5 recession is now two years old and due to run out of gas in any case in at most a year's time.

DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM DOOM

I never dreamed that I wouldn't have room for Alter's frothings, but such is the case. I--

"What the fuck are you telling me, Geis! You saying you've squandered eighty pages and can't even let me review the two lousy books I've found?"

Afraid so, Alter. So you can relax and loaf for another---

"I WANT TO REVIEW THESE BOOKS! Oh, I know, you're so pissed off that I've taken over the GALAXY column that you're crowding me out of SFR! Tit for tat, huh?"

Not at all. You're welcome in SFR. You're a popular feature, but as you can plainly see, here we are on page 78 and I have eight books to take care of and three magazines, and---

"Well, cut something! Cut the Kirk interview! Cut Brunner! Cut that page-hog Schweitzer! Who's more important around here, him or me?"

It is not possible at this late date, Alter! I promise you you'll have two or three pages next issue.

"Yaaaaah! You and your bullshit promises!"

I swear...by my wood stove and my gardens.

"well...I'll trust you just one more time. I'll save DIONYSUS: THE ULTIMATE EXPERIMENT and STOLEN FACES till next issue. But I'm not happy, Geis, and the readers are not happy! Think on that!"

I will, Alter. I'll change my ways.

"Oh, cut the mealy-mouthed crap; you sound like a drunk or a politician. Just make damned sure I get my THREE PAGES next issue or I'll cut off your cock and feed it to the cat."

Blench I expect to honor my word, of course. You needn't worry.

"I'm not worrying. You're the one with a worry."

Yes... Well, let me get this issue put to bed....

But first---a choice comment on some recent news. The FBI has reported that major violent crime declined last year. But theft increased, especially of CB radios from cars... "Breaker, breaker, this is Rolling Stone. You read me, Marsh-

mallow?" "Ahh, Rolling Stone, this is Cut and Run. I'm ripping off Marshmallow's unit. Ten-four."

BUT--the comment I had in mind was that according to the statisticians and Liberals who have been demanding less violence (and sex) on TV, violence and sex both hit all-time highs on the tube last year... Yet now we find that major, violent crime declined in that period! How can this be?

It could be that judges are sentencing career criminals to longer terms, and it could be that there are, every year, from now on, relatively fewer in the 15-25 age group from which most crime comes, and it could be that there is no real relationship between TV and real-life behavior. Could be that crime, social adjustment, rage, envy, hate, etc. are conditions born in the years before TV watching becomes chronic and are resident in interpersonal relationships. It could be that TV, porno, drugs, alcohol, etc. are scapegoats. Could be there is no real solution to these crime creating conditions, given the imperfection of humanity. But who is willing to accept that as true? Just you and me, eh, friend?

MAGAZINES RECEIVED

GALAXY. March 1977. Vol. 38, #1. \$1. James Baen, Editor. Cover by Stephen Fabian for GATEWAY.

Novelettes: "They Who Go Down to the Sea" by Christopher Irwin.

"The Wallad Blonde" by M.A. Bartt-er.

Short Stories: "The Tides of Time" by Gordon Eklund.

"No Renewal" by Spider Robinson.

Serial: GATEWAY by Frederik Pohl (Part 3 of 3).

Showcase: Rick Sternback.

Forum: "Interstellar Probes and Starships" by Dr. Robert L. Forward.

A Step Farther Out By Jerry Pournelle: "Promises and a Potpourri."

The Alien Viewpoint By Richard E. Geis (Alter-Ego).

Directions: letters.

COMMENT: Seems that a large portion of GATEWAY was taken up with the hero sparring with his computer psychiatrist, and in the end all this psychological sweat seemed not worth the space. The main story of solving the Heechee enigma is far more interesting and compelling. Please God save us from authors (even well-known ones) who feel compelled to be quasi-mainstream by endless introspection with neurotic protagonists.

"The Wallad Blonde" was interesting and readable in spite of a low-tension plot...or lack of story. More a slice-of-future-life.

The short stories...sort of cliched...sort of flawed...they

grab and hold but don't pay off.

Steve Fabian's interiors make the other artists look sick. His cover is okay, for him, which is very good for anyone else. Has he ever come on professionally in the past few years. This cover, through no fault of his, is too similar to the last-published issue, and that is probably not Jim Baen's fault, either, since the January and February issues were dropped by the publisher. Were those covers set aside, or is this the January cover?

VORTEX #2 is a letter-size British prozine. This issue is spectacular for its Rodney Mathews space cover.

This issue is noteworthy and collectible for the color display of art and covers by Rodney Mathews inside, and an interview with him. A superb artist.

The fiction is part two of a Moorcock serial: THE END OF ALL SONGS; and short stories by Ravan Christchild ("The Machine at Cheviot Close HQ"), and James Corley ("Mutant"). 45p or about a buck. I got my copy from Fantast Medway (see SFR contents page for the address).

SMALL PRESS MAGAZINE

FANTASY CROSSROADS #10-11 from that fellow madman and workaholic, Jonathan Bacon, Box 147, Lamoni, IA 50140. This combined issue costs \$5.

If you're into fantasy, REH, Lovecraft, etc. this is a magazine you'll want. The standouts this time, for me, are the long interview with specialized publisher Donald M. Grant, and the Roundtable Discussion of Robert E. Howard oriented editors and publishers: Bacon, Fenner, Hamilton, McHaney, Roark, Sasser, Scithers and Warfield.



BOOKS RECEIVED

DEMON SEED

By Dean R. Koontz
Bantam 10930-8, \$1.75

COMMENT: Dean has improved tremendously as a writer since he was "in" the sf genre some years ago. This novelization of the picture is very well done; smooth, professional, engrossing.

It's the story of a lovely young woman with hangups who isolates herself (it is in the late 1990s) in a computer-operated house which is burglar-proof, which talks to her in an idealized male voice, which cooks, adjusts lights and heat and music and holovision at her spoken command... and it is about what happens to her when a sentient computer (new, experimental, amoral) based in the nearby college labs takes over her home and holds her prisoner for his experimentation with the human body, especially the human female body... I'll have to see the movie when it gets to the \$1. theaters.

THE INFINITY BOX

By Kate Wilhelm

Pocket Books 80955, \$1.75

'A Collection of Speculative Fiction.'

Introduction by Kate Wilhelm.

"The Infinity Box"

"The Time Piece"

"The Red Canary"

"Man of Letters"

"April Fools' Day Forever"

"Where Have You Been, Billy Boy, Billy Boy?"

"The Fusion Bomb"

"The Village"

"The Funeral"

COMMENT: Wilhelm is a fine writer. An effective writer.

SPACE OPERA

Edited by Brian Aldiss

Berkley 03349-9, \$1.50

COMMENT: 14 stories in four sections: 1. Is Everything An Illusion? 2. "Precipices of Light That Went Forever Up..." 3. Exile Is Our Lot 4. The Godlike Machines.

Brian Aldiss says in his Introduction:

'Science fiction is a big muscular horny creature, with a mass of bristling antennae and proprioceptors on its skull. It has a small sister, a gentle creature with red lips and a dash of stardust in her hair. Her name is Space Opera. This volume is dedicated to her.

'Science fiction is for real. Space opera is for fun. Generally.

What space opera does is take a few light years and a pinch of reality and inflate thoroughly with melodrama, dreams, and a seasoning of screwy ideas.'

The bulk of these stories are from the 1950s. The youngest is '72s "Zirn Left Unguarded..." by Shekley, and that is more satire of the form than legitimate. So is space opera dead? Is this a nostalgic collection of a sub-genre past?

THE SLAVE OF FRANKENSTEIN

By Robert J. Myers

Pocket Books 80943, \$1.75

COMMENT: Another pirating of a "public domain" character. Well-written in the mid-19th century style, this is about the aging son of Dr. Frankenstein and his battles in pre-Civil War America with the Monster who has become paranoid, Evil, and out to do in the human race.... I suspect Mary Shelley is restless in her grave.

SHORT HAIRS TIME....

Five books to go and no room to do it, so we're down to mere listing.

ROADSIDE PICNIC And TALE OF THE TROJKA by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky, Macmillan, \$8.95, 1977, 256 pages.

THE CHILDREN OF SHINY MOUNTAIN by David Dvorkin, Pocket Books 80954, \$1.75.

FLOATING WORLDS by Cecelia Holland, Pocket Books 80867, \$1.95.

THE VENUS FACTOR, Edited by Vic Ghidalia and Roger Elwood. Manor Books 12475, \$1.25. [Eight sf, fantasy, and supernatural stories by women.]

SUPERHORROR, Edited by Ramsey Campbell, St. Martin's Press, \$7.95. [Nine previously unpublished stories by well-known horror/macabre/fantasy writers. I've got to read this.]

THE FINAL WORDS

I am not happy with the amount of reduction I had to resort to in order to get all the books/mags, etc. listed on the contents page. I had not realized they would mount up like that. Next issue I'll be forewarned and will leave room on page 4.

This issue was a lot of work, but it's very close to what I want SFR to be, in format and content. My only fear is that the publishers will increase their output of sf and fantasy, and that I will crack under the strain. There will not be a further increase in pages.

See you next issue---in August.

"Three pages, Geis! Remember!"
Oh, shut up, Alter!

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